

A CUBAN RIVER.

PEEPS AT MANY LANDS

CUBA

BY

FORD FAIRFORD

WITH TWELVE FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS
IN COLOUR

BY

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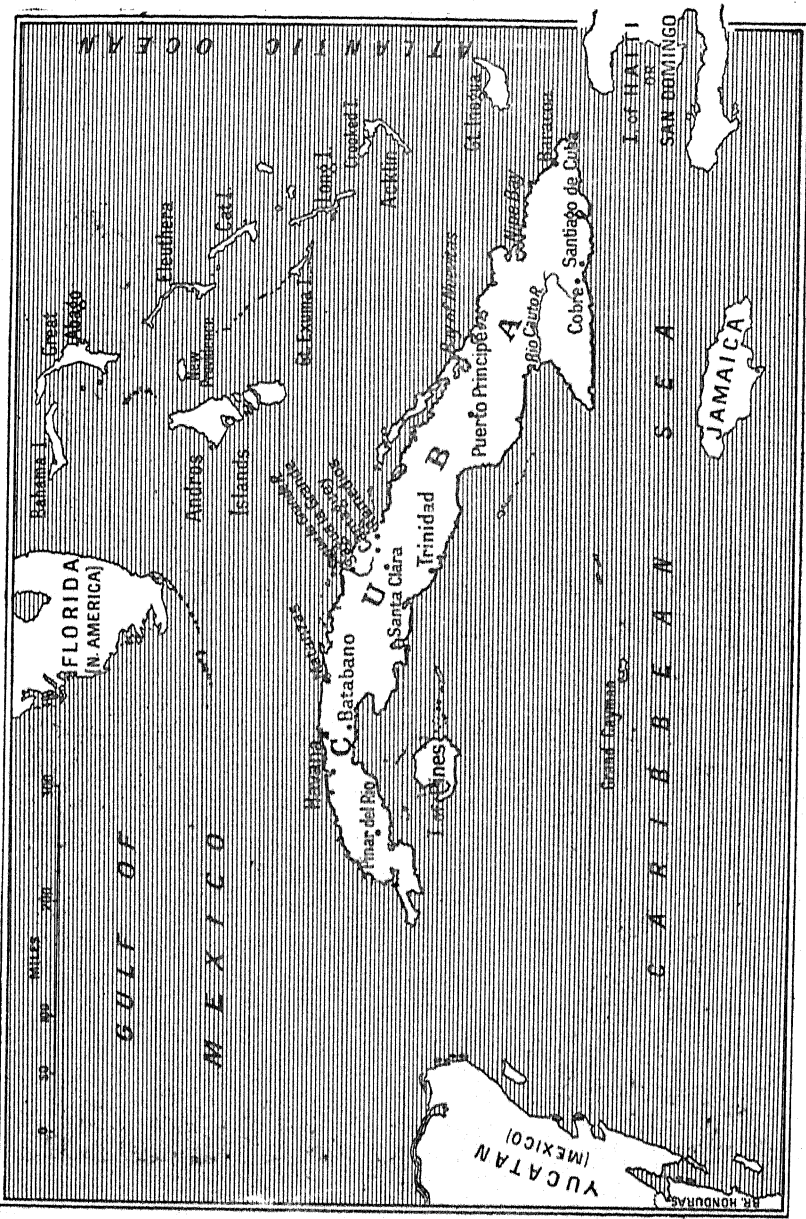
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SKETCH-MAP OF CURA.

C U B A

CHAPTER I

A PRELIMINARY PEEP AT THE ISLAND

WITHOUT referring to a map of the world, I wonder how many boys and girls could locate the beautiful island of Cuba. I also wonder if it is generally known that this enchanting country is associated with the daring and romantic sea voyages of the great Christopher Columbus. There, now I can hear my readers saying that of course Cuba must be somewhere in the West Indies, for that was where the celebrated navigator had so many strange experiences many days after his departure from Spain to discover new worlds across the broad Atlantic.

It is of this beautiful island in the West Indies that I wish to write. So full is it of historical interest, romantic people, wonderful birds and animals, magnificent trees and flowers, glorious sunsets, strange tales of pirates and haunted caves, that I scarcely know where to begin my story. Suppose I begin by introducing you to its physical features, its discovery, and a little of its history.

If you will take down from your bookshelf a good map of the world and turn to those myriads of islands

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comprising the West Indies, you will see that Cuba is the largest of the group. You will notice, too, that it is a long, narrow strip of land surrounded by water—the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. Its length is 730 miles, and its breadth varies from about 30 miles in the west to 100 miles in the east.

The coasts are very rugged; hundreds of little islands, rocks, and coral-reefs make navigation extremely hazardous. Along the south coast are many imposing mountains, and numerous marshy islands inhabited by reptiles, such as snakes, lizards, and crocodiles, meet the eye of the traveller as he looks from the deck of the steamer taking her circuitous course towards Santiago de Cuba.

Many streams run down from the mountain tops to the sea, dispensing their welcome waters to the tobacco and sugar plantations in the smiling valleys; but very few rivers are bold enough to boast of their length and breadth. The largest river is the Rio Cauto; its rival in importance is the Sagua la Grande.

The island is divided into six provinces, each celebrated for its production of a specific commodity. Pinar del Rio is renowned for its tobacco; Havana for its sugar and tobacco; Matanzas for its agricultural lands; Santa Clara for its cattle and sugar; Puerto Principe for its cattle raising; and Santiago for its sugar, coffee, and mining.

If you were to visit Cuba and were unable to speak any language but English, you would experience great difficulty in touring the island, for Spanish is the language of its people. The population is a little over two millions, the greater proportion being Cubans. A

A Preliminary Peep at the Island

third of the population are negroes ; over 185,000 are Spaniards ; the Chinese number about 45,000 ; there is an extensive American colony, and there is a goodly number of Germans, French, and English. More will be said of these peoples and their characteristics in a special chapter a little farther on.

The story of Cuba and its people is very romantic and often tragic. To do justice to such a subject would require many volumes. Therefore we can do no more than just peep at several of the more important scenes on the stage of its history.

When Christopher Columbus started on his memorable expedition from Spain in 1492 to discover the western route to India, he discovered what is now known as the island of Cuba, although the great navigator himself was not aware that the newly-discovered land was surrounded by water. He found the country inhabited by races of Indians similar to those inhabiting the whole of America at that time. These people were called Caribs and Nahacs, and they lived by fishing, hunting, and rude agricultural pursuits. Probably you have read how these savages ran helter-skelter through the woods when first they caught sight of the big foreign ships on which Columbus and his crew crossed from Spain. When they saw the white faces of these strange visitors they fell at their feet in supplication, supposing them to be gods from the unseen world.

Columbus landed at what is now termed the Bay of Nuevitas, and took possession of the country in the name of the King of Spain, calling it Juana in honour of Prince John, the King's son. This name, however,

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was soon afterwards changed into Fernandina, then Santiago, the name of Spain's patron saint ; subsequently Ave Maria in honour of the Virgin Mary ; and finally Cuba, the name by which it was known to the aborigines when Columbus first set foot on its soil.

Columbus tells us that he found the people scantily clad, but apparently living in comparative ease and happiness. He found that, although they had no gorgeous religious ceremonies, they believed in, and worshipped, a great and loving God who protected them from dangers on earth, and at death led their souls into a land of eternal peace and bliss.

In 1511, Diego Columbus, son of the famous explorer, started from Spain with three or four hundred people to colonize the island, the first settlement being in Baracoa. Then followed the settlements at Santiago, Trinidad, and San Cristobal de la Habana, from 1514 to 1516. This latter name was finally transferred to what is now the city of Havana, the "b" in the centre of the word being still retained by the Cubans.

From the foundation of these settlements began a long series of wars and piracies, extending to the invasion of Havana by the British Admiral, Lord Albemarle, in the year 1762.

It was in 1538 that the first disaster overtook Cuba, her capital, Havana, being reduced to ashes by a French privateer. To prevent a recurrence of similar disasters, the Spanish Governor, Fernando de Soto, ordered the construction of the fortress Castillo de la Fuerza, the ruins of which still look out across the entrance to the harbour. To-day, however, no guns bristle from its walls ; instead, the Cubans nightly gather not far from

A Preliminary Peep at the Island

its walls to listen to the music of the Cuartel Guards' Band playing at the foot of the picturesque Prado.

In 1554 the city was again attacked by the French, and utterly destroyed. Once more the Spaniards rose to the occasion, rebuilt the city, and constructed two strong fortresses, El Morro (Castle of the Three Kings) and La Punta, both of which you would see standing to-day if you looked from the deck of a steamer as she entered the beautiful land-locked harbour of Havana.

In 1665, harassed by so many marauders year in and year out, the Spaniards began to build a great wall around the city, hoping that it would protect them from those persistent bands of pirates who infested the seas in the palmy days of piracy and pillage.

For some years the Spaniards managed to keep their enemies at bay ; but in 1762 an English fleet of 200 vessels and 15,000 men startled the city by their appearance one morning outside the harbour. For a month the Spaniards fought valiantly to defend their country from invasion ; but at last the British captured the commanding fortress of Morro Castle, and turning their guns upon the forts of La Punta and La Fuerza, the entrance to the city was accomplished by the capitulation of its defenders. When Albemarle turned his back upon Havana, he carried with him spoils of the value of nearly one million pounds.

One other war that determined the present status of Cuba took place as recently as 1898 ; but as this will be referred to in another chapter, we will pass on to a little chat about the Cuban people, their characteristics, and the conditions under which they are at present living.

CHAPTER II

AN ENCHANTED CITY

THE city of Havana is so unlike any other city in the Western World that we must take our time as we pass its historic, romantic, and enchanting streets.

If you started on a steamship from New York to Cuba you would experience a growing sense of expectancy in the morning that you came on deck to stretch your limbs. It is a three days' journey from the bustling commercial capital of the United States. The steamer comes to the picturesque east coast of Florida, thus adding to the pleasure of the all too brief sea voyage. As you lean over the side of the ship to peer into the sea below you are at once impressed by the indescribable color of the water. To the right of the steamer, along the Florida coast, the water is bluish-green; to the left, dark purple; while the track of the steamer is a dark blue that fills the soul with a restless longing for something unattainable. Overhead a glaring sun shines in a brilliant pale blue sky, and across the calm comes a gentle breeze to cool the heated brow, for you are daily drawing nearer to the Equator.

Leaping out of the quiet water, their white bodies shimmering in the sunlight, are shoals of porpoises. They love to gambol in the haunts of their ancestors, and at first sight you would fancy that they were

An Enchanted City

happiest creatures alive in the ocean. However, life is not all sunshine with these fascinating dwellers in the sea. Sometimes you will observe great consternation in the school ; you may then conclude that some wily enemy in search of food is chasing them wildly through the water, and woe betide the poor little fellows that happen to be in the rear of the company. Flying-fish are abundant here also, and few sights are more interesting than that of a company of these little creatures skimming over the water for a distance of fifty yards, and finally diving beneath the white crest of a gently undulating wave.

At five o'clock on the fourth morning of your voyage you are aroused from your slumber by the shrill tones of a bugle which tell you that you have passed Morro Castle, and that the peaceful harbour of Havana has been reached in safety. Hurrying to the deck you are astonished at the scene of activity. Scores of vessels surround your steamer, small boats called "lighters" approach to receive the cargo, and gangs of scantily-clad men jabbering in a strange tongue, or whistling or singing, inform you that you are no longer in the land of your mother-tongue.

After the doctor has been on board to see that all passengers are free from disease, you descend to a little ferry boat on which you are quickly carried to the Customs House (called "Aduana" in the Spanish language). Here your luggage is examined by a Customs official, after which you are free to wander at will through the great mercantile centre of the Cuban island.

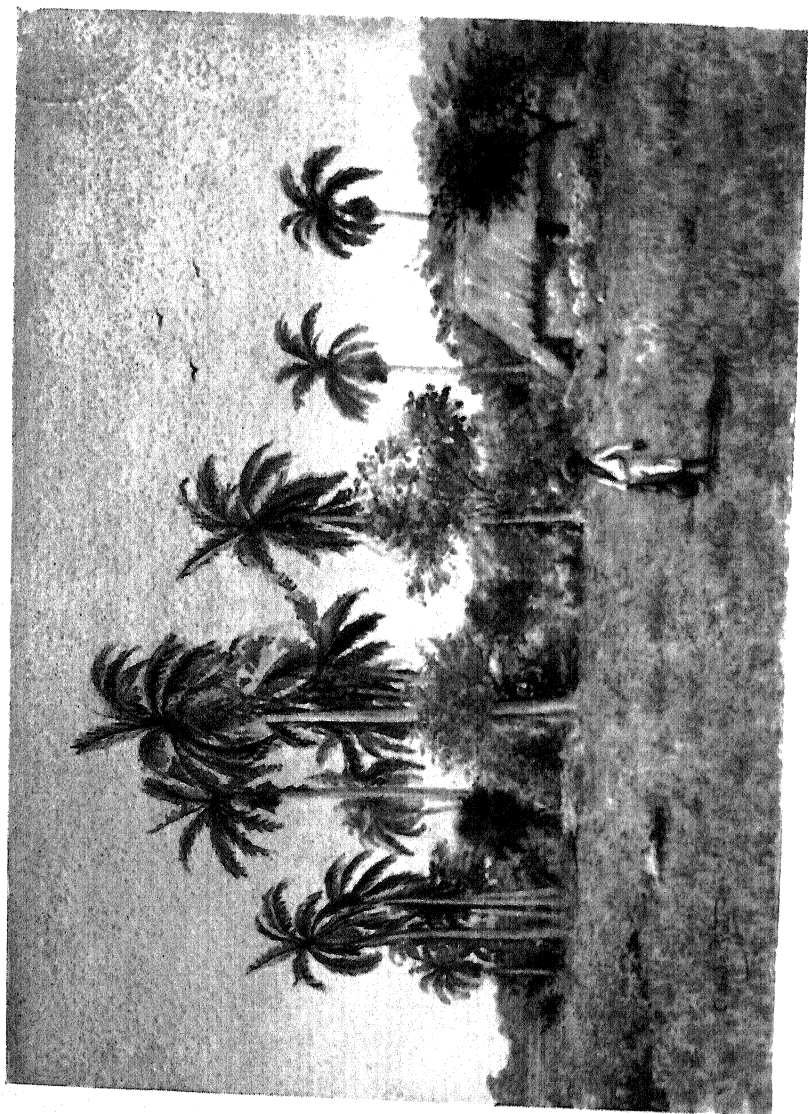
When you have satisfied the inquisitive luggage examiners by exposing to their scrutiny the contents of

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your grips and trunks, it is probable that you will drive through Obispo (Bishop Street) to one of the large hotels in the neighbourhood of Central Park. As you pass on your way the first impression will be the extreme narrowness of the streets, many of them being too narrow to permit the passing of two vehicles. You will also notice that in the principal commercial quarter only one person at a time can occupy the footpath, the being not more than eighteen inches in width. The gorgeous colours of the shops will strike you as most peculiar, some being blue, others green, some white, many yellow. At the corner of every street are to be observed cafés thrown wide open, with scores of small clean tables studding the floor, at which people at every hour of the day sip the sweet juices of the delightful refreshing fruits of Cuba. It is probable that the windows will be shining brilliantly, so that you will drive beneath a canopy of awning stretching from one side of the street to the other.

When you have registered at your hotel, you will naturally wash, brush-up, and descend to the "comedor" (dining-room), where a menu in Spanish will be placed before you. Of course, unless you know the Spanish language, you begin to wonder how it will be possible to keep on friendly terms with your stomach. However, your mind is soon set at rest, for the "mozo" (waiter), who has probably noticed your embarrassment, begins to translate the items for you. Not that waiters always take kindly to the dishes, because every nation has its own dietetic peculiarities.

Now that luncheon is over we will take in some of the interesting sights of the city. First we will



A CUBAN LANDSCAPE.

An Enchanted City

Central Park, with its goodly array of laurels, poincianas, almonds, and palms, at the feet of which ornamental shrubs and sweet-scented flowers blaze forth in a very pageant of everchanging beauty. In the centre of this alluring mass of flowers and greenery stands the commanding statue of José Martí, the "Apostol" of Cuban independence. Close to the base there are sculptured "nineteen figures, which show this nation moving forward—men, young and old, armed and unarmed; women and children, all eager, straining towards the goal ahead, which is Independence; and overshadowing them with her great white wings is Victory, bearing the palm of peace." Thus does the sculptor, J. Vilalta de Saavedra, describe the monument.

At every hour of the day the Central Park has a different message to deliver: In the early morning, when out of the heart of the country the mule-drawn carts, laden with pineapples, go rumbling by to the weird Cuban songs of their drivers; at noon, when heat-worn workers loll on the seats beneath the shadows of the trees; and in the evening, when the glory of a golden sunset spreads its glamour over the nodding roses. But it is never so fascinating as when hundreds of citizens at nightfall stroll leisurely over its pavements, or sit in groups to discuss the events of the day; or when the hatless maidens, attended by their mothers, sit in the yellow light of myriads of lamps, handling their fans as artistically as though they held the monopoly of the art of fan manipulation. At the foot of the Martí monument La Banda Municipal strikes up the familiar and soul-haunting strains of "Carmen," or some other of the classic operas; and over all this semi-

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fairyland of faces the brilliant moon sends her shafts of silvery light from a dark blue sky riddled with myriads of restless stars.

Leaving the Central Park behind us, we drive slowly down the Prado, a picturesque street, down the centre of which is a double concrete promenade, artistically decorated with shrubs, flowers, and an army of fresh green laurel trees. On either side of the Prado are handsome residences of imposing architecture. The doors and windows are exceedingly heavy, and are protected by massive iron bars and picturesque grilles. Extending from the doors and windows to the edge of the footpath are ornamental archways supported on strong pillars. If you were to examine the ponderous doors and windows, you would think that Cubans had the fear of pirates haunting their minds perpetually. The grilles protecting the windows range from one to three inches in thickness, and the locks, knockers, bolts, and bars near the doorway are thicker still. In the lower part of the Prado alone there must be thousands of tons of iron attached to the walls of residential property. However, it is all very imposing. And in the evening when the families gather in the doorways, or sit on their upper verandas to catch the breeze from the sea, there are few sights in Havana more suggestive of peace and plenty. Moreover, the Cubans have studied their climate, for, by erecting these iron grilles outside their doors and windows, they are able to enjoy the free circulation of fresh air through every apartment of their houses, the effect of which is registered in the robust chests of the men and women, and the healthy light glowing in the eyes of all their children.

An Enchanted City

At the foot of the Prado, between the "carcel" (city jail) and the old fortress of La Punta, is a piece of land that was once the place of public execution, upon which now stands a most interesting memorial to certain boy-students of Havana University who were put to death to appease the anger of a bloodthirsty band of Spanish volunteers. I will tell you the story.

In the year 1871, a class of medical students at the University were charged with desecrating the grave of a Spaniard who had been killed in a duel by a Cuban at Key West during a political quarrel. This incident gave the Spanish volunteers garrisoned in Havana an opportunity to let loose the devilish spirits within them against the Cuban population whom they hated. That no desecration had been committed was fully demonstrated publicly; but the Spanish soldiers threatened mutiny unless the students were put to death. To appease them, eight of these innocent youths were ordered to line up; in a few moments their lifeless bodies lay riddled with bullets where now stands the tablet recording the shameful crime. The dead bodies were thrown into a cart, buried in unconsecrated ground, criss-cross, in a filthy ditch, as was the customary method in those days of burying traitors. Some time after the execution the bodies of these innocent youths were exhumed and transferred to the Colon Cemetery, where their bones now rest beneath a magnificently sculptured monument erected to their memory by the people of Cuba.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY AND ROMANCE

BEFORE leaving Havana we must certainly visit a few of the historic buildings around which there cluster so many tragedies, legends, and weird romances.

The Plaza de Armas (Place of Arms) is interesting as the spot upon which the first Mass was held at the foundation of the city in 1519. Looking sombre and sad in its yellow drapery the President's Palace stands immovable amid the fickle, varying years. Wearing the architectural garb of an earlier period El Templete (The Temple) awakens a world of sentiment in the soul of him who loves the things of other days. El Templete is erected on the spot where once stood a beautiful ceiba tree. Under this venerable tree, in 1795, the bones of Christopher Columbus, in an ebony sarcophagus, were inspected, prior to their removal to a vault in the Cathedral close by. A bust of the discoverer stands in the court. Only once a year is the chapel open, and if you visited it on the night of November 15 you would see thousands of citizens walking dutifully towards its doors in order to gaze at the only treasures it contains—three pictures by the artist Escobar. The various Government departments, the Hall of Representatives, La Fuerza are all in proximity to the Plaza de Armas.

Not far from this interesting spot, if you were with me, I should take you on a little boat across the bay to see Castillo de San Carlos de la Cabaña.

History and Romance

St. Charles of the Cabin) standing high on a hill overlooking the harbour. At one time this was the main fortification of Havana. Down the slopes of the hill much precious blood has flown into the deep blue water below. It is not a pleasant place to visit, for if you have any imagination, ghosts of valiant men still patrol the trenches, and around the lips of the tired cannon lingers the last breath of expiring shot.

After passing through the grim vaulted hall we come to the memorable Laurel Ditch (Los Fosos de las Laureles) where hundreds of revolutionary insurgents were shot and flung to the hungry sharks at the base of the ramparts. A small tablet, representing an angel bearing aloft the soul of the unfortunate patriot, marks the spot where the victims fell beneath the shots of the Spanish soldiers.

What a maze of contorted paths there are within the fortification ! How cold the blood becomes when imagination gathers up the direful deeds perpetrated in the lofty passages, vaulted halls, and icy prisons ! The echo of one's footsteps in the sombre halls adds to the almost intolerable silence of the vast and dreary forts. The only relief to the scene is an occasional flower peeping through the scattered shrubs, half shy, half timid, as if it were expecting the return of feet that years ago trampled in the blood of Cuba's valiant sons.

What a relief to ascend to the ramparts where one can see the quaint city of Havana pursuing her peaceful course ; or hear the twelve old Spanish guns on the summit send out their salutation to approaching ships. May their throats for ever thrill with salutations !

We must not jump into our little boat again until we have walked as far as Morro Castle. The stories associated with this Castle of the Three Kings would fill many

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volumes, for it has played a noble and bloody part in the history of Cuba. How many thrilling tales could its moat and dungeons tell ! I shall have space to tell but one.

One glorious afternoon in June, 1762, the Captain-General of Havana was notified from the watch-tower of Morro that in the distance was visible a fleet of 200 sail. Could it be the dreaded British ships at last arrived ? Alas ! it was. The clatter of alarm-bells filled the air ; consternation took possession of the people. In a short time infantry, cavalry, and armed inhabitants set out to repel the invader from the shore. Monks, nuns, women and children marched out of the city ; but male citizens were armed and ordered to take part in the defence of Havana. Admiral Sir George Pocock was in command of the British fleet ; the land forces were in charge of the gallant Lord Albemarle.

For eight or ten days the British guns hammered at Morro fort, but the Spaniards clung valiantly to their battered fortress. By June 27 the British had successfully undermined the seaward bastion, and were ready to deal the final blow at the besieged. Before charging the mine Lord Albemarle sent a letter to the Spanish Commander, Velasco, inviting him to surrender and thus prevent unnecessary bloodshed ; but the brave defender of the Morro Castle declined to consider the overtures, preferring to die at his post rather than capitulate. On the following day the mine was fired, and through a breach in the wall the British sea-dogs poured in overwhelming numbers. Velasco fell mortally wounded, as did also his second in command, Marques de Gonzalez, sword in hand.

With the guns of Morro pouring a deadly fire on La Punta and the city batteries, the fall of Havana was

History and Romance

inevitable. On July 14 the British flag floated above the city, while the Spanish troops marched out with colours flying, drums beating, and all the honours of war.

The British spoil included "nine warships, several merchant vessels and their cargoes, and large stores of tobacco and other commodities awaiting export, other articles and money—a total of £736,185 (\$3,980,900)."

Only for one year, however, did the British flag wave over Cuba. In 1763 the island was restored to Spain.

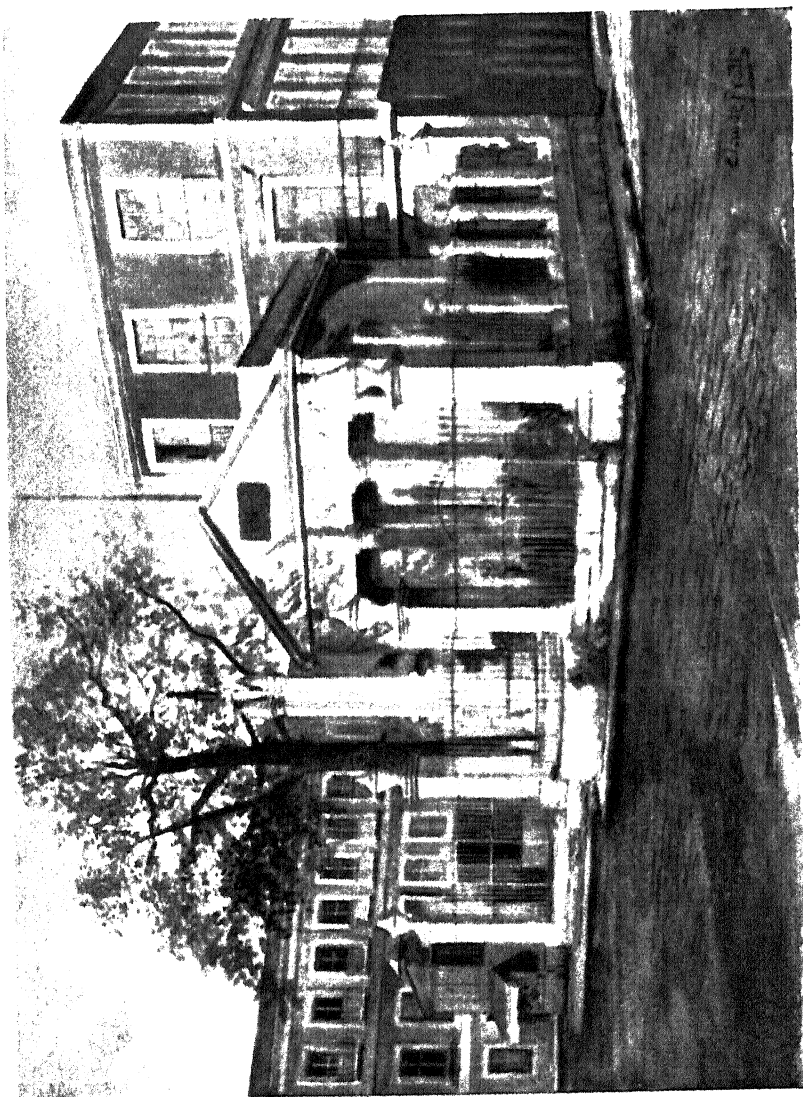
Well, suppose we recross the harbour, and visit one or two more places of interest. You could not say that you had seen every object of interest in Havana unless you had visited the oldest and oddest fortification in Cuba—La Fuerza. The erection of this "city defence" was begun in 1544, under the superintendence of a bold Spanish sea-rover and explorer named Hernando de Soto. From this fort Soto sailed in search of new lands, new seas, and new treasures. One day he set out on an expedition from which he was never to return. In the turbulent waters of the newly-discovered Mississippi he found a grave. On his departure he left his bride, the Lady Isabel de Bodilla, in charge of La Fuerza. From the tower in the top of the fort one can see the distracted bride scanning with longing and expectant eyes the vast expanse of sea around, if haply she might catch a glimpse of a sail to herald her lover's return. For four years she looked in vain. At last the remnants of Soto's fleet came sailing up the mouth of the harbour, only to break to the lady the sad news of her husband's death. History relates that the devoted Isabel never smiled again, but died a short time afterwards with a broken heart.

In the tower the bell is silent ; below the rhythmic

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patter of the feet of the rural guards resound above the silent dungeons at its base.

There are many, many more places of interest we might visit, but I will take you to one more only, because with it is associated a very romantic little story. On the outskirts of the city stands an ancient church ; near the church stands a tree under which one must always speak the truth, for, as Miss Wright says, " In the early years, when Indian chiefs were still powerful enough to make it worth the Spaniards' while to placate them, the daughter of a cacique of a Guanajay tribe was robbed of a wonderful necklace of pearls. So great was her father's wrath it became necessary to punish someone for the theft, and as the culprit could not be identified, they picked upon a young man who, by some unhappy circumstances, might be safely charged with the crime. He was condemned to die, although he denied his guilt to the very moment of execution. A priest, mounted on a mule, accompanied him to death, which was to be inflicted at the spot where the church stands now. The victim, still protesting that he had stolen no pearls, asked for ten minutes' final grace, and it was granted. The firing squad stood close at hand, and especially near was the officer in charge. The priest, still mounted upon his mule, kept by the prisoner, and he, as the minutes speeded, called upon Santiago and upon Mary to heed his plight. The padre's mule, at that critical juncture, snatched at a single leaf drifting down from the tree in shade of which he rested, and missed it ; but his teeth caught in the doublet of the officer in charge of the firing squad, ripped it open—and the missing pearls fell to the ground in sight of all!"



CHAPTER IV

QUAINT SIGHTS IN THE STREETS

At any hour of the day scenes are enacted in the streets of Havana that are not to be observed in any other portion of the Western World. If you rise in the morning before five o'clock, your ears are filled with the music of mellow bells ringing from the old cathedral tower, their inspiriting tones carrying far out to sea, filling the hearts of the port-bound mariners with exultant joy. A walk through the narrow streets would reveal to you scores of mules drawing heavy garbage-laden carts, for at dawn the city's refuse is collected from the bins that line the streets in thousands. You would also meet the jovial night-watchman delighted to greet the dawn. The duty of these men is to watch over certain sections of the city allotted to them, and to see that no thieves and no fires disturb the slumbers of the residents. It may seem strange to a visitor, but so great is the faith of the residents in the integrity of the night-watchmen, that they are allowed to carry a key of every door, by the use of which they are able to enter and rouse the sleepers if fire breaks out or thieves break in.

Gliding through the narrow entrance to the harbour tired fishermen direct their smacks to the landing-stage, and the night's catch is exposed for sale on Caballeria Wharf. Facing the Morro rises the sun, and "the

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morn in russet mantle clad" tips with gold the old Spanish guns on the ramparts of Cabañas. A shroud of mist vanishes from the water like a dream ; snow-white sails of schooners shiver in the breeze ; various craft disturb the stillness of the water ; while from the laurel-trees that fringe the bay the mellow tones of birds ring sharp and clear upon the morning air.

Passing through the city streets are the produce-bearing drays drawn by mules to the accompaniment of jingling bells. Follow them to the market and listen to the pandemonium of the salesmen. How they shout—how they gesticulate—how they barter—and how they cheat ! Pity the buyer who does not know the Spanish language, and who cannot barter too, for in those Spanish skins there lurks a spirit of bargaining that quite out-jews a Jew. If you are asked fifty cents for any commodity, you must barter until you get it for twenty-five, and then rest assured that it is worth no more than ten.

It is now eight o'clock, the hour when the shop assistants draw up the corrugated shutters, and pull down the awning to protect the merchandise from the glaring sun. Electric cars go racing through the streets perpetually sounding their hideous gongs ; enraged drivers shout at their struggling mules ; motor-cars go panting and belching over the cobbled roadways ; news-boys yell "*El Mundo*," "*Post*," "*El Dia*" ; street vendors thrust a ream of lottery tickets beneath your nose ; organ grinders start their grinding ; and at every corner of the streets, men already perspiring from the heat, lounge at the dainty little tables sipping their cooling drinks through long, thin straws.

Quaint Sights in the Streets

In the midst of all this din let us sit down at one of the little tables, take a "piña colada" to drink, and watch the passers-by. There goes a man chanting in low tones as he slowly pushes his fruit-laden trolley, "Manguito y Mangue, de la tierra las piñas." Here comes the street pedlar pushing his handcart decorated with every conceivable kind of tinware for kitchen use. Yonder is the vendor of fine linen, delicate laces, pins, needles, and thread, crying, "Dedales y tijeras finas." Why need the ladies travel through the sweltering heat to the large stores? Here is a veritable dry goods store on a pair of wheels. The man approaching us with a basket strapped to his neck is the confectioner, crying in a musical voice, "Dulces, dulces." What is that strange whistle we can hear, the range of which is four or five tones rising through a trill to a sharp, high squeal? It is the man who calls "Scissors to grind, knives to grind." Here comes the hawker of boots, shoes, and slippers, scores of them hanging on a long iron rod suspended from his shoulder. Hear him chanting "Zapatos y zapatillas; zapatillas y zapatos." Turning the corner is a little mule, blinking his eyes in an indifferent sort of way, his back laden with a multitude of show cases through the glass of which are visible a thousand and one indispensable household necessities. Steadily jog-trotting home from market we see a pair of oxen, yoked to an ugly cart, with its heavy oscillating wheels stretching from one side of the narrow street to the other. Here comes another curiosity in the form of a potting-soil seller—"tierra colorada de siembra."

If we turn to the names of the streets we shall also

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find much of interest. All the names are based on some historical incident, or have some local association. Amargura (Bitterness) Street is so named because the penitent Catholics were in the habit of conducting their doleful processions through it. Damas (Ladies) Street took its name from the many handsome ladies who at one time lived there. Obispo (Bishop) Street derived its name from a pious Bishop who took his daily walk along it years ago.

In every street of Havana, if we take the trouble to look over the windows of the large stores, we shall find that they bear a title equally as strange and interesting as the names of the streets. A store or shop is not recognized by the name of the proprietor so much as by its historic title. Among other titles we find La Coronacion de Jesus (The Crown of Jesus), Las Ninfas (The Nymphs), El Vestido Rosa (The Pink Gown), La Marquesita (The Little Marquise), and over a confectioner's store is to be seen the name of La Gracia de Dios (The Grace of God).

Another very quaint sight is that of a funeral. Turning the corner of a street we are suddenly confronted by what appears to be a gorgeous State coach such as the Kings of Europe ride in on the way to Coronation. From four to eight horses draped in black netting fringed with yellowish gold tassels draw the hearse. The hearse is ornamented with gold, and the drivers wear scarlet coats trimmed with gilt braid, and resting upon their great white wigs are cocked hats similar to those worn by English royalty in the far-off days of George I. On the top of the hearse is the figure of a kneeling angel covered with floral tributes

Quaint Sights in the Streets

from the relatives and friends of the deceased. As the hearse wends its way to the cemetery even the poorest person in the street removes his hat until the cortège has passed.

If we were fortunate enough to be in Havana on Festival Sunday we should see one of the prettiest (and perhaps the noisiest) fêtes of the Western World. Doors, windows, and balconies are decorated with flowers, laurel leaves, palm leaves, and bunting. Motor-cars and carriages throng the Central Park, Prado, and the Malecon. Hundreds of pretty girls are attired in every conceivable colour ; tin horns become deafening ; flowers are flung at the girls on the balconies ; and young men wearing hideous masks keep the crowds in roars of laughter far into the night.

Hour after hour this revelry is continued until, tired of the fun, the merry-makers troop home in the early hours of the following morning, singing their national songs and pelting one another with massive balls of paper that have accumulated in the doorways and gutters of the gaily-lighted streets.

CHAPTER V

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

WE have already seen that when Columbus landed in Cuba he found the island inhabited by tribes of Indians called Caribs and Nahacs. Just when these aborigines became extinct in the island history does not relate. It is known that they were a shy people and very superstitious. At the sight of the strange white men in the ships they took to the woods, but on being assured that these "gods" meant to do them no harm, they became quite friendly, even going so far as to visit the big ships with costly presents for the crews. In return for these gifts they received beads, clothing, and "shining ornaments," which they considered to possess the mystic power of healing. Their dwelling-places were rude huts made from native woods and leaves, and they were usually built on the hills or near the streams. It is said that the modern Cuban houses in the country still reflect the quaint designs of those Indian "bohios." Their huts were scantily furnished—crude wooden or stone tables, carved chairs, and hammocks. Their chief diet was fish, although they made a kind of bread from the roots of the *yucca* plant. They worshipped idols of wood and stone, burned tobacco as incense, and believed in the immortality of souls. They were warlike, tribe frequently attacking tribe, using as weapons of warfare

The People and their Characteristics

the time-honoured bows and arrows and hard stone hatchets.

These tribes appear to have passed into oblivion in the early part of the sixteenth century, for we find African slaves being imported by the Spaniards at that time because there were no natives to work in the mines and on the soil.

Cubans are descended from the Spanish owners of mines and sugar plantations and the imported African negroes. There are, of course, many pure white Cubans, and nothing pains them more than to refer to them as having "black blood in their veins." Some writers, however, insist that the Cubans proper are "negroids," and not white. This naturally causes a good deal of feeling between the "blacks" and the "whites." It may not be obvious to the casual visitor, but its existence is proved by the sharp lines drawn between the two peoples in social circles. On the whole, however, there exists a commendable harmony among them, due doubtlessly to the interdependence essential to the island's commercial existence. Negroes are not inhibited from public offices, since several have held important positions under the Government. Moreover, negroes have always played a noble part in the defence of their country, among whom may be mentioned the indomitable General Maceo.

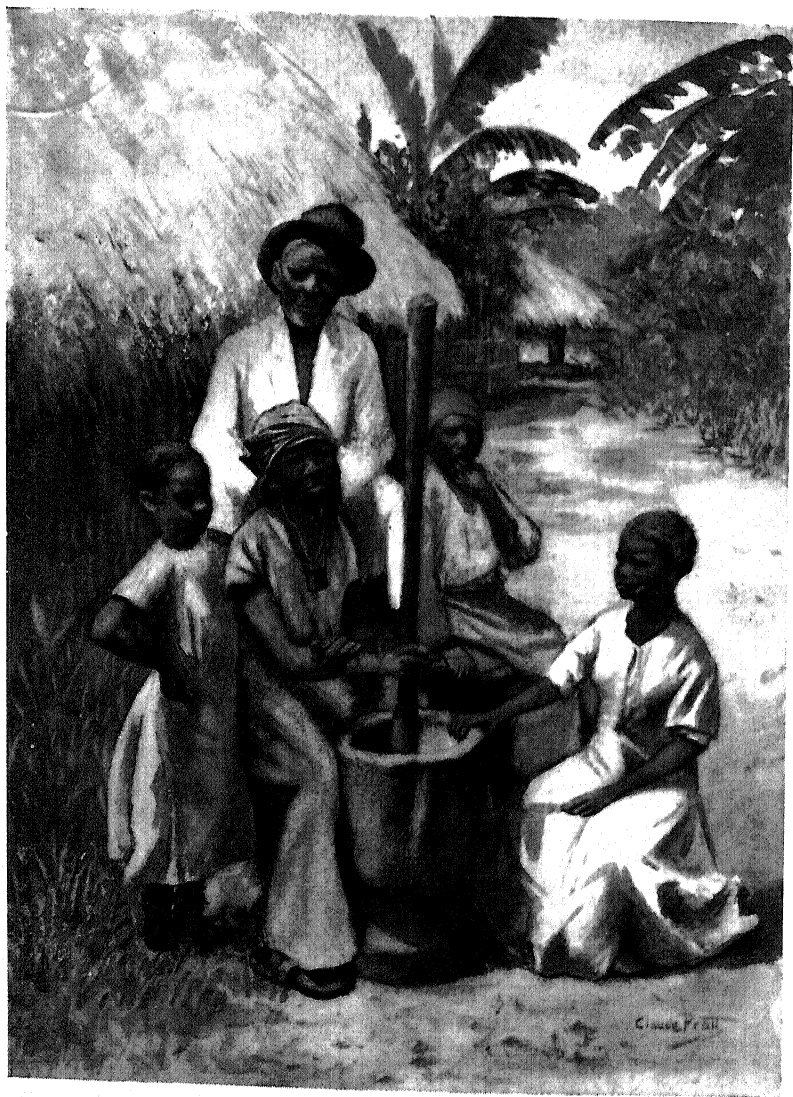
To-day the population of Cuba—2,043,980—is composed of Spaniards, Cubans, Americans, English, Canadians, Germans, Chinese, and several other nationalities.

If the Cubans can be admitted as church-goers, they cannot be recognized as profoundly religious. Certainly

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they have little respect for the Fourth Commandment. Sunday in Havana differs very little from the other six days of the week. Many of the stores and all the cafés are in full swing. Theatres are open, plays, comedies, and vaudeville shows occupy the stages. Bands play in the parks and on the Malecon; and the din of the street organs is only exceeded by the clatter of electric gongs attracting the people to places of amusement. Cricket, tennis, golf, and baseball are played; pleasure boats and yachts dot the harbour; and hundreds of coaches carry the crowds of pleasure-seekers to all parts of the city. To the Englishman accustomed to the quieter and more religious atmosphere of the Old Land, life in Havana is altogether beyond comprehension.

Until the American intervention of 1898, Roman Catholicism was the only recognized and permitted form of worship. A Protestant dying in Cuba was denied the burial service of his faith. Indeed, no Protestant Bible was allowed to escape the vigilance of the Custom House. The Catholic churches were commercial rather than spiritual; their property included vast sugar plantations and immense coffee estates. They are not so rich to-day, however, as much of their property has been from time to time confiscated by the State, and their monasteries converted into store-houses. Saints' days were religiously kept, and at one period of Havana's history no less than five hundred festivals were celebrated in the churches during the year. Great pomp and splendour accompanied the church services. It is recorded by one historian that the churches of no city in Europe consumed so many candles as did those of Havana.



A PRIMITIVE COFFEE MILL

The People and their Characteristics

Holy Week ceremonies were gorgeous in their splendour. Effigies of Christ, the Mother of God, and images of the saints were borne through the streets, the people bowing in adoration as they passed. An American thus describes one of these processions: "The next day, which was Good Friday, about twilight, a long procession came trailing slowly through the streets under my window, bearing an image of the dead Christ lying upon a cloth of gold. It was accompanied by a body of soldiers holding their muskets reversed, and a band playing plaintive tunes; the crowds uncovered their heads as it passed."

All this pomp has now passed away, and more toleration is shown to Anglican and Nonconformist bodies. The Anglicans have a fine cathedral in Havana, and the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians have their places of worship presided over by fully ordained ministers.

Until the Americans spent \$10,000,000 (£2,000,000) on schools in Cuba, education was not as prominent in the island as it should have been. To-day primary education is compulsory, and many fine old buildings have been converted into schools for the children. An Academy of Sciences was erected by the Americans, and also a School of Arts and Trades, at a combined cost of \$300,000 (£60,000). Cuban teachers were dispatched in batches to Harvard University and schools in New York that they might become better acquainted with up-to-date educational methods. English is taught in some schools, but this year (1911) the Government has declined to include that language in the curriculum of the public schools.

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The old University of Havana still looks from its secluded hillock across the Gulf of Mexico. It was founded in 1728, and from its historic classrooms many of Cuba's brilliant sons have gone forth to give the country the benefit of the knowledge gathered there.

If the Cubans are somewhat self-contained in their social life, they are nevertheless affable and hospitable. They do not take readily to "foreigners," but if once you have been "received," they look upon you as practically a member of the family. They are exceptionally musical, artistic, and literary. In the free open air they love to stroll at leisure through the streets and parks, and one always gets the impression that it is more to be seen than to see. As there is plenty of money in the country the people are naturally extravagant and diligent seekers of pleasure. But who shall blame them? Here where the country is one vast garden, the air balmy all the year round, the sun perpetually shining in a sky of brilliant blue, no wonder that their hearts are light, and that they extract from life all the honey it has to give.

CHAPTER VI

HOME LIFE

It has been truly said that the home life of a people reveals their national characteristics. In countries where home life is non-existent, or is degraded, the national life is impoverished. In countries where home life is a people's ideal the national life becomes thereby enriched. It is well, therefore, to know something of life in Cuban family circles if we would form an estimate of their national worth.

In an earlier chapter we noted the external design of Cuban residences. We will now examine the interior. Of course, there is naturally a vast difference between the beautifully designed and commodious houses of the upper and middle classes and the squalid apartment tenements occupied by the poor. As we approach the door of a house in the residential sections, if we do not find the family fanning themselves on the veranda we shall be invited to enter through an intricately forged iron doorway. The first thing that impresses us is the spacious "patio" or hall, usually decorated with palms, shrubs, and flowers. Sometimes the family sit here perpetually see-sawing on rocking-chairs and turning over the common gossip of the day. Cubans are extremely fond of birds, so that in the "patio" may frequently be seen a parrot, a canary, and several other beautifully-feathered songsters of the tropics. The

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dining-room and drawing-room are not crowded with furniture, ornaments, and pictures ; but what furniture exists is massive and strongly made. The floors are not carpeted ; they are laid with marble blocks delicately and artistically figured. The walls are very high, for the Cuban must have a lofty ceiling to prevent the accumulation of heat. Sometimes the walls are papered, sometimes painted.

The stairs are of marble and uncarpeted. In each bedroom we see a massive wardrobe, a dressing-table 10 feet high, and a washstand of similar dimensions. Each room, up and down, adjoins the outer walls of the house, and the windows are slatted to permit a free circulation of air night and day. At the back of the house, detached, or in the basement, is the kitchen, where the black or Chinese cooks are busy preparing meals. It would take English-speaking boys a long time to accustom themselves to Cuban meals. At seven or eight o'clock in the morning, fruit, coffee, and a small roll are taken ; breakfast is taken at twelve o'clock and consists of fish, meat, vegetables, and fruit ; and at seven dinner is served, comprising soup, fish, meat, vegetables, and dessert. The Cuban really takes only two meals a day. The food is usually very greasy, but digestible withal.

In the city of Havana the poorer classes live in tenements or apartments, and but for the fact that doors and windows are always open, disease would spread greater havoc among them than it does. In many of these hovels children run about naked ; the rooms are scantily furnished ; and the poverty of these poor people's food is registered in their emaciated bodies and

Home Life

diminutive statures. The majority of these children are either black or "negroids," partly black and partly white. One could not exaggerate the odour of these tenements, for until quite recently the city of Havana had no sewerage system. One can easily understand why, prior to the American intervention, diseases were so rampant in the city. However, better things are in store for even the poor. So diligently have the medical and sanitary authorities prosecuted their labours during the last few years, that the death-rate of Havana is now lower than in any other city of Latin America.

One striking and commendable feature of home life in Cuba is the devotion of parents to their children, although there are many who affirm that this devotion is confined solely to Spanish families and their descendants. Indoors, in the streets and parks, at carnivals and theatres, mothers and daughters are inseparable companions. Fathers love the companionship of their children, and enter fully into all their joys and sorrows. The home life of the real Spanish is a thing of joy.

These families are usually very musical, the guitar being the favourite instrument. There is a romantic, peaceful, and comforting air pervading some of the circles, particularly where at sunset the children gather in the "patio" and strike their fingers across the guitar and mandoline to the evident delight of the parents, fanning themselves in their rocking-chairs.

There is a proverbial saying in England that "the Battle of Waterloo was won upon the playing-fields of Eton." The remark contains a world of sane philosophy. The nation that dispensed with its sports and pastimes would soon find itself in a state of decadence. Games

Cuba

are the purifiers of blood, the builders of muscle, and Nature's creators of social intercourse between child and child, man and man—conditionally, of course, that such games do not appeal to the baser passions, but to the noblest and best that is in us. The effect of some sports is degrading, as bull-fighting, cock-fighting, and prize-fighting; but happily for mankind these are almost suppressed in every part of the civilized world. On the other hand, cricket, tennis, baseball, hockey, and kindred sports tend to develop the latent powers of body, heart, and mind.

As Cubans are mostly descendants of old Spanish families, it is natural that the love of bull-fighting and cock-fighting should be in their blood. For many generations these degrading spectacles were tolerated in the island; but they have been suppressed by legislation, and only occasionally, in some spot temporarily free from the vigilance of the rural guards, do these cruel sports now take place.

Although the inhabitants live in the open air all the time (for even when indoors they are in the open air, as you will have learned from the description of their houses), the heat is so intense that only during a month or two in winter is it possible to indulge in sports calling into strenuous exercise the various muscles of the body. Some games, of course, are played, even in the summer, such as baseball, tennis, and golf; but the strongest physique is soon defeated by the glaring rays of the sun, which strike almost vertically from the sky. Baseball is played in Havana on Sunday afternoons, when thousands of spectators congregate to cheer on their respective favourites.

Home Life

Boys and girls are passionately fond of swimming. This is probably due to its refreshing influence in such a warm climate. As there are many sharks in the waters around Cuba, it is natural that stories should be prevalent of children being devoured by them while bathing. I expect, however, that these tales are told by parents as a warning to the children not to swim too far out to sea.

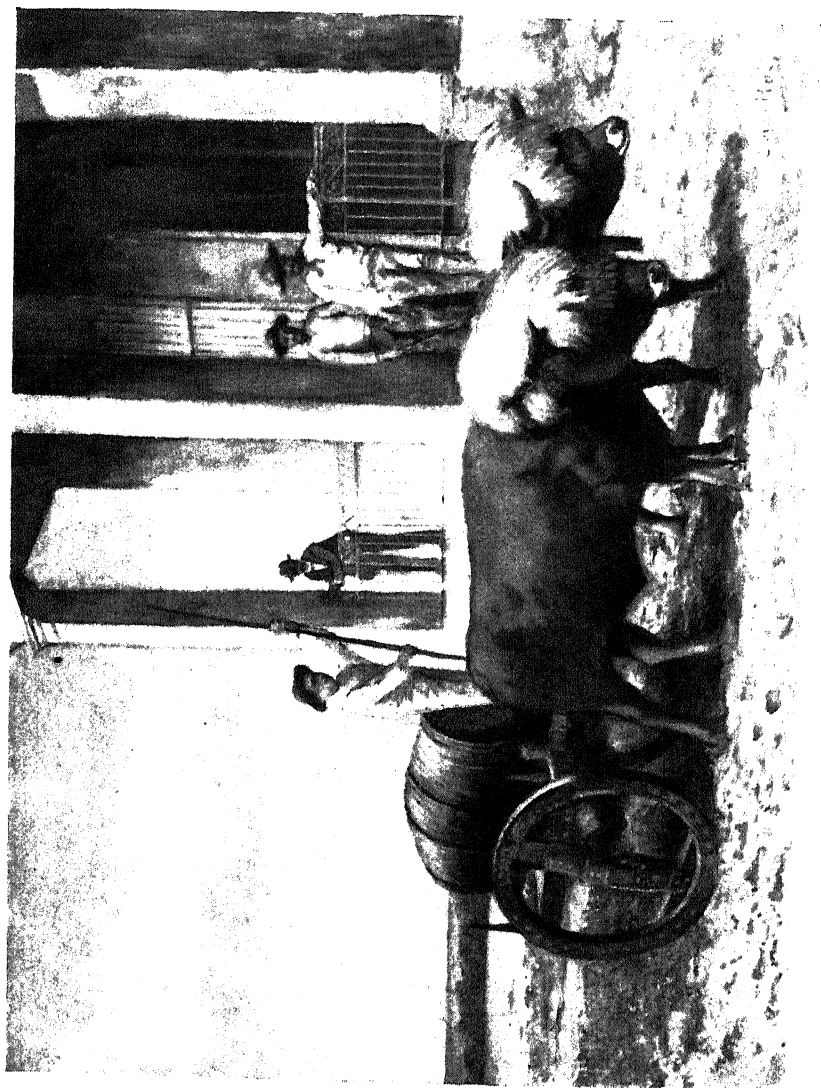
CHAPTER VII

HOW CUBA IS GOVERNED

It is impossible to understand a country thoroughly unless we know something of its mode of government. The aspirations, ideals, and characteristics of a people are reflected, however imperfectly, in the form of government they have decided to adopt. Sometimes a people's government is born, sometimes it is achieved, and sometimes it is thrust upon them. That of Cuba has been achieved.

The system of government prevailing in Cuba to-day is yet in its infancy. Until quite recently her people were under the despotic (as they termed it) rule of Spain. We have already seen that for one year, 1762-63, the island passed into the hands of England; but the latter restored it to Spain again in accordance with an agreement between the three great nations then at war—England, France, and Spain. During the nineteenth century many of the Spanish Colonies of Central and South America threw off the yoke of Spain, and, inspired by their example, Cuba continued her struggle for independence almost to the dawn of the twentieth.

Three great fighting men—José Martí, Bartolomé Maso, and Maxima Gomez, prosecuted the battle for freedom until the year 1898, when the United States,



How Cuba is Governed

being roused by the Spanish atrocities, a war between the latter two countries resulted in Spain's abandonment of her treasured "Pearl of the Antilles." During four years the United States acted as "policeman" in Cuba, establishing law and order, and initiating the newly liberated people into the coveted art of self-government. The yellow fever that had for so many years devastated the population, due to unsanitary conditions (conditions loved by the mosquitoes, whose business it was to deposit the yellow fever bearing germs in human bodies), was valiantly fought and stamped out. The city of Havana was thoroughly cleaned, and studded with parks and "prados," where the people might gather together, forget their long struggle for independence, and bask in the sunshine of the new and better day.

In 1902 the Republic of Cuba was proclaimed, and Estrada Palma, one of the noblest of Cuba's sons, was made President, amid general rejoicing throughout the island. However, the new machinery of self-government did not work very smoothly. President Palma resigned in 1906, and once again a Provisional Governor of the United States of America stepped in until new elections could be held. On January 23, 1909, General José Miguel Gomez was formally inaugurated President, and under his guidance the people of Cuba continued to be directed until January this year (1913).

The present constitution is the Republican representative form of Government, composed of legislative, executive, and judicial sections. The Senate and the House of Representatives constitute the Legislative section, the former comprising twenty-four members

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and the latter sixty-four. Each of the six provinces elects four Senators, whose term extends to eight years. Representatives are elected by the people for a term of four years.

The President and a Cabinet of eight Ministers exercise executive power. The President's term of office is four years; he may continue in office for eight years, but not longer.

The judicial power is composed of a National Supreme Court, one Superior Court for each province, thirty-six courts of the First Instance, and several smaller courts.

Apart from the Republican Government, each province has its Governor and Council elected by the people; and the municipal districts each have their Mayor and Council also elected periodically by the people.

The military organization, under the direction of United States officers, has reached a state of efficiency far beyond that of any other country of Latin America. It comprises infantry, cavalry, heavy and light artillery, field-gun corps, and mountain-gun detachment. The principal camp and school of instruction are at Columbia, and were established by the United States at the first intervention; but since the evacuation by the Americans they have been maintained by the Cubans. The uniforms and equipment conform to the standard of the United States Army.

The navy consists of only three vessels in active commission; but several war-ships are now under construction.

To maintain peace and order throughout the island, there exists a constabulary called "Guardia Rural" (Rural

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Guards), whose duties consist of visits to the tobacco and sugar plantations to preserve order, and to patrol scattered villages for the same purpose. Each guard carries a Remington carbine. Their uniforms are of brown khaki, their shoes and leggings of russet leather; and each one owns his own horse, which is always a very docile, well-groomed, and well-fed animal. If you travelled by rail you would notice that two guards patrolled the train periodically; so that a traveller is always well protected during his trip from one end of the island to the other.

In addition to the Rural Guards there is also a municipal police force, whose duties, in the larger towns at any rate, usually consist of regulating the traffic and giving information to the thousands of tourists annually visiting the country.

CHAPTER VIII

TRADE AND COMMERCE

Boys and girls are not always interested in the trade and commerce of a country ; but as Cuban industrial methods are so fascinating, a peep at them for a few moments cannot fail to entertain you. Special chapters have been devoted to tobacco, fruit, and sugar growing, the leading commercial commodities exported ; so that only a few remain to be dealt with now. The chief objects of this chapter, however, are to show how the Cuban conducts his business, what he sells and buys, and the extent of his commercial operations.

I suppose it is generally known that Cuba's fertility as earned for it the name of "The Pearl of the Antilles." So rich is its soil, and so favourable is its climate to agriculture, that it would be difficult to name another country of the same area so full of promise and profit for tillers of the soil. Without doubt the finest tobacco and sugar in the world, and certain fruits, are drawn from the responsive earth of Cuba. The annual tobacco crop is worth \$50,000,000 (£10,000,000), and each successful year the sugar crop reaches approximately 1,250,000 tons. The fruit crop is generally worth \$3,000,000 (£600,000) annually. The total import and export trade is about \$200,000,000 (£40,000,000) annually. Figures are not interesting, I know, but the

Trade and Commerce

above are quoted to give you some idea of the wealth of this comparatively small island.

Half a million crates of oranges are exported yearly, and one million crates of pine-apples find their way to the tables of Europe, and particularly the United States.

Cacao, grape fruit, vegetables, lumber, cattle, minerals, and sponges are also large items of export.

Cuba has to purchase from foreign countries all her cloth and its manufactures, meats, flour, fish, and numerous manufactured articles.

The Cuban is considered a shrewd bargainer, but no one doubts his integrity. If he enters into a commercial agreement, he may be relied upon to carry it out to the letter. A worthy feature of the business life in Cuba is the unity of interest pervading its commercial houses. If from any cause a business house is financially embarrassed, it can generally rely upon the monetary aid of the stronger houses to tide it over its difficulties. This seems hard to understand when it is borne in mind that the merchants insist on credit extending from six to twelve months. However, this system is time-honoured, and the Cubans are too conservative to change their methods.

Another interesting feature of commerce in Cuba is the apprentice system. If you passed down the leading commercial thoroughfares at meal-times you would notice the principals of the firms taking their meals in the stores with their apprentices and clerks. These assistants put in very long hours, often from seven in the morning until nine at night: but they are loyal to their employers. And although their salaries are not large they usually save enough money to take a share

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in the business ultimately, or set up on their own account in Havana or some of the smaller provincial towns.

Here I should like to tell you about one of the most wonderful clerks' clubs in the world, called the "Asociacion de Dependientes del Comercio de la Habana." This club was founded in the year 1880 by a number of business men who were anxious to establish a closer relationship between employers and employees. The club is situated on the Prado, and is one of the most imposing buildings in Havana. Its membership numbers over 22,000. There is a commercial department where hundreds of young clerks are taught shorthand, typewriting, and kindred commercial subjects. There are also departments devoted to mathematics, natural science, belles-lettres, and languages. Physical culture is one of its features, and a fine gymnasium, fully equipped, is attached to the club. Games, concerts, and carnivals are held periodically.

Its leading feature, however, is its magnificent sanatorium, surrounded by beautiful gardens in a suburb of the city. Here sick members of the club are under the care of twenty of Havana's leading physicians, and under such ideal conditions they are given an opportunity to recuperate fully before returning to their customary labours.

In one part of the club the visitor may see dental parlours at the disposal of the members, and shower, douche, and plunge baths ready for use after the exercises in the gymnasium are over.

A café is attached to the building where meals can be taken at specially reduced charges. A splendid library

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is in existence containing thousands of books, as well as newspapers, magazines, and writing-tables.

Above these rooms, at the top of a magnificent marble staircase, are the grand *salon*, the banquet-hall, and ballroom. These rooms contain about one hundred strong columns. They are artistically decorated, and under the influence of crystal candelabras by night their grandeur is exceedingly picturesque.

All the benefits of this wonderful institution can be obtained by payment of the small sum of \$1.50 Spanish silver (5s. od.) per month. It is not surprising that this club is the envy of all the American continent.

The leading banks of Cuba are the National Bank of Cuba, the Royal Bank of Canada, and the Bank of Nova Scotia, the latter two, as their names imply, being Canadian institutions. These Canadian banks have branches all over the island, and their advent a few years ago marked an era in the stability of Cuban finance.

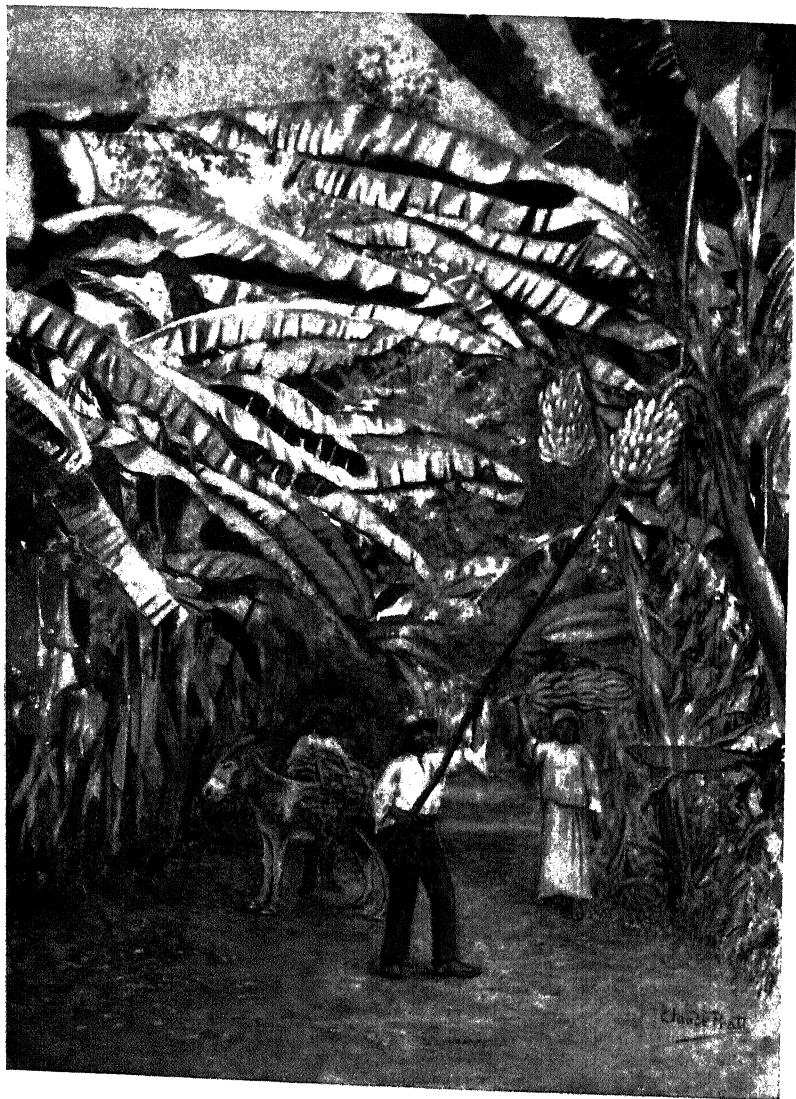
A visitor to Cuba is always puzzled by the multitude of coins and their values, and it is a mystery to him how in the midst of such varied coinage confusion is avoided. Here are a few items of currency all differing from one another in value. American currency : gold—\$20.00, \$10.00, \$5.00, \$2.50 ; silver—\$1.00, 50 cents, 25 cents, 10 cents, 5 cents ; copper—1 cent ; bills—\$1.00, \$2.00, \$5.00, and upwards. Spanish currency : gold—1 onza, 1 centen, 1 dublon, 1 escudo ; silver—1 peso, 2 pesetas, 1 peseta, 1 real ; copper—2 cents, 1 cent. There is in existence also a French gold louis of the value of 20 francs. So you see that if ever you pay a visit to Cuba, a special course in commercial arithmetic will do you no harm.

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The postal and telegraph systems of Cuba are well equipped and creditably manipulated. There are about 450 post-offices, and 150 telegraph offices in operation throughout the island, with 5,000 miles of wires at the disposition of the public. The parcel post service between foreign countries and Cuba is antiquated. For example, parcels posted in England, the United States, and Canada are sent via Germany, which seems too ridiculous to be true. Nevertheless, such is the case. Wireless telegraph stations are in operation in many parts of the island.

Railways extend from Havana to Santiago de Cuba, with ramifications to the various commercial centres covering a distance of 2,500 miles.

There are scarcely any navigable inland waterways ; but steamship communication exists between Cuba's leading ports and the chief commercial ports of America and Europe.



A BANANA GROVE. Page 43.

CHAPTER IX

THROUGH THE ORCHARDS

WHEN you have been purchasing fruits in the markets, stores, and shops, I dare say you have often wondered where they all came from. You have seen thousands of beautiful red-brown pineapples being unloaded from railway carts, hundreds of bunches of bananas, crates of oranges, grape fruit, mangoes, and cocoanuts ; and you knew that they had come by rail from a great shipping port ; but perhaps you were not quite sure in which part of the world they had been grown. Well, although all the fruits imported by England and the United States do not come from a specific country, many thousands of tons are purchased annually from the sub-tropical island of Cuba. I am sure that it will interest you very much to come with me for a ramble through the Cuban orchards to see how these luscious fruits are grown, harvested, and packed, and shipped to the breakfast and dinner tables of English-speaking people.

If you were to tour Cuba by motor-car in the months of July and August, you would notice extensive sections of sandy soil being prepared by plough and harrow for the reception of the pineapple plants. If you passed through those sections again a little later you would be astonished at the sudden transformation that had taken place in so short a time, the growth of vegetation is so rapid. However, it usually takes twenty months to bring the pine to maturity, and four or five crops can

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be taken from the same orchard of plants. Thousands of little prickly-headed plants are marshalled in rows like an army of soldiers at drill. These rows are generally about three feet apart, the distance between each plant being from twelve to eighteen inches. The sun, air, and rain have thus every facility for performing their natural functions, which are nourishing the plants and bringing out from their hearts the luscious red-brown fruit. Few sights are more beautiful than an orchard of pines in bloom ; and few sights are more interesting than the gathering of the pines some months later. Thousands of farm hands can be seen in the month of June, scantily clad, and wearing large, broad-brimmed hats to protect them from the burning rays of the sun, cutting off the pineapples and stacking them ready for crating. The shipping ports of Cuba, particularly Havana, are crammed with crates waiting for the big ships to transfer them to foreign markets. Last year no less than 1,300,000 crates of pines were harvested in the island and sent abroad. During the season Havana stores seem to be choked with the fruit. All day long street-vendors patrol the city crying "Piñas, piñas, piñas!"—in fact, there seems to be nothing else in the streets but hawkers of the russet-eyed pines.

Bananas are becoming more popular every year as a table fruit. The consumption in the United States is greater than even that of the United Kingdom. Try to imagine the earth at the Equator encircled with bananas thirteen times, and that will give you the number consumed by the United States in 1910 ; 40,000,000 bunches, or 3,000,000,000 bananas. This almost incalculable mass of fruit cost the consumers of the United States over \$35,000,000 (£7,000,000).

Through the Orchards

Great Britain, Germany, and France consumed approximately \$10,000,000 worth (£2,000,000). This vast commerce is practically a modern one. Fifty years ago very few bunches of bananas could be seen in the markets of Europe and the United States.

The most common variety is the yellow skin known as the Guineo ; but their flavour is not to be compared with the red banana of Cuba.

When an area of land is marked out for a banana plantation, the first process is to send an army of men with axe and machete to cut down the mass of shrubs, vines, and wild vegetation. The land being cleared and tilled, shoots are taken from matured trees and planted in rows about ten or twelve feet apart. Here, again, we have evidence of the marvellously rapid growth of plant life in Cuba. In less than two months the infant shoots grow to a height of about six feet. If you watched them you could almost perceive the growth. Very soon a point in the middle of the crown appears, which unfolds into a beautiful large red blossom. It is instructive to watch the intricate processes of Nature connected with the banana-plant. The stalk is continually shooting forth pretty blossoms that in due course fall off, leaving behind them a little family of infant bananas not at all unlike the fingers of a half-closed human hand. The development of these fingers is very rapid, although the fruit is not ready for harvesting until nine or twelve months after the blossoming. The fingers take a downward course at first, but in a little while they commence to turn slowly upward, so that the ripened bunches are pointing towards the sky instead of towards the earth, as one would naturally expect.

When the fruit is ready for harvesting, the labourers

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go into the plantation armed with sharp instruments attached to long palm poles (for some of the plants reach a height of thirty feet), and sever the plant from seven to nine feet from the earth. The top of the tree falls forward, thus enabling the labourers to cut the bunches from the stem by a stroke of the keen-edged machete. On the heels of the cutters follow an army of men whose duties are the collecting of the fruit and the carrying of it to the warehouses or packing-stations along the railways, rivers, and coasts. Great care has to be exercised in harvesting, for the bananas must be cut green and at a certain stage of their maturity ; otherwise they would rot before reaching the markets of the world.

As this fruit is of a quickly perishable nature, it must be rushed to the markets immediately. Great activity marks the life of railway, river, and port in harvest-time, and every labourer is forced to keep his muscles taut no matter how terrific the heat may be.

These peeps at the pineapple orchards and the banana plantations are sufficient to give you an idea of the vastness of Cuba's fruit-lands. They by no means embrace all, however. Orange groves are abundant, but by no means as abundant as they should be. The flavour of the Cuban oranges is delicious, and they grow to a very fine size, too. Grape fruit is grown in various parts of the island, and the industry is likely to be a profitable one in the future when transportation rates are reduced and foreign markets exploited.

Citrus culture is considered worthy of continued effort, although many growers have failed through inexperience. Mangoes, alligator pears, and melons are grown, but more for the home market than for export.

CHAPTER X

HOW CIGARS ARE MADE

I SUPPOSE all boys and girls have heard of the celebrated Havana cigars, but very few are familiar with the processes of growing, cutting, and curing the tobacco, and finally rolling it into the fat cigars that are shipped to every quarter of the civilized world. The processes are most interesting.

In the first place, we must visit the world-famed district of Vuelta Abajo where the finest tobacco plant in the world is grown. If we visit the district at the latter end of August we shall see the "vegüeros" (tobacco farmers) preparing small patches of land on the slopes of the hills for the reception of the seed. After the soil has been thoroughly prepared, little seeds are scattered over it and kept well watered for a few days. In less than a month, thousands of little green heads are seen smiling in the sunlight. These are thinned out and passed on to the planters, who plant them in rows much after the manner of cabbage planting. The growth of the plants, under the influence of the powerful sun, is very rapid, so that in about ten weeks they have attained a height of over four feet, each plant bearing twelve or fourteen leaves. This period of growth is always an anxious one for the planter. So dependent is the maturity of the plants upon specific

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climatic conditions that the least deviation from them may mean the failure of the season's crop. Moreover, the planter must keep his eyes open continually for a little worm that looks upon the tobacco leaf as a delicacy. You can readily understand that if a tobacco leaf is riddled, it is no longer fit to enter into the composition of a select Havana cigar.

Now we must take a peep at the reapers a few months later. In the tobacco districts are erected barns made from massive palm-leaves ingeniously laid in folds. Here the reapers bring the leaves to pass through intricate processes of drying and curing. Every care has to be exercised in the curing, for negligence to turn the leaves to meet the vagaries of the climate would result in depreciation of the quality.

When the required colour and texture have been developed, the leaves are bundled and left to ferment under the influence of a scorching sun. Over and over the stacks are turned so that every leaf gets its due proportion of climatic treatment.

The next process is that of selection. The leaves are moistened in order to facilitate handling by the selectors. These selectors are men who have been taught the art of selecting by their ancestors. A stranger, or one who had lived on the farm for years, could never hope to compete with these Cubans. It is a gift born of long experience, or of heredity. There they sit on their little stools in the midst of a multitude of stacks, and you may be sure that no leaf is consigned to the wrong stack. To avoid a possible error, each stack is examined several times, not even one suspicious leaf being allowed to enter its wrong classification.

How Cigars are Made

The final process through which the leaves pass before their despatch to the cigar-making factories is called "baling." Every bale bears a distinctive mark to notify its quality. Sometimes the finer classes of tobacco are allowed to "ferment" for a lengthy period, such period being decided by the quality of the harvest and the judgment of the manufacturer.

Let us now return by train to a large tobacco factory in Havana, to see how the leaves are manufactured into cigars, and packed ready for market.

Unless we were told that the stately building we are about to enter was a cigar factory, we should conclude that we were visiting a large public institution, or a palatial private residence. After ascending a broad marble staircase we pass into a magnificently furnished suite of offices where the lightning "click, click" of typewriters inform us that we are in a veritable hive of industry. A request to see the factory is conceded, and an attendant at once conducts us into a long room lined with wooden benches at which hundreds of white and black men sit quietly rolling leaves into cigars of all qualities and sizes. Every cigar is made by hand, for this is an industry that laughs at the efforts of machinery to supersede the cunning of human fingers. To each man, or set of men, is allotted the making of a specific brand. Some men are more expert than others. If we entered one of the large rooms at a certain hour of the day we should see a man sitting on a table in the centre of the workers reading a book or a newspaper. This is the factory "reader" who is paid to read aloud in stentorian tones to the men as they dexterously fold leaf upon leaf into the finished cigar.

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The second room we enter is devoted to "stemming" the leaves—that is, cutting out the long, hard stem in the centre of the leaf, and preparing it for the makers in the adjoining room. Here, too, we find a number of experienced sorters whose duty it is to examine every leaf carefully and assign it to its proper place among the numerous heaps of varying qualities.

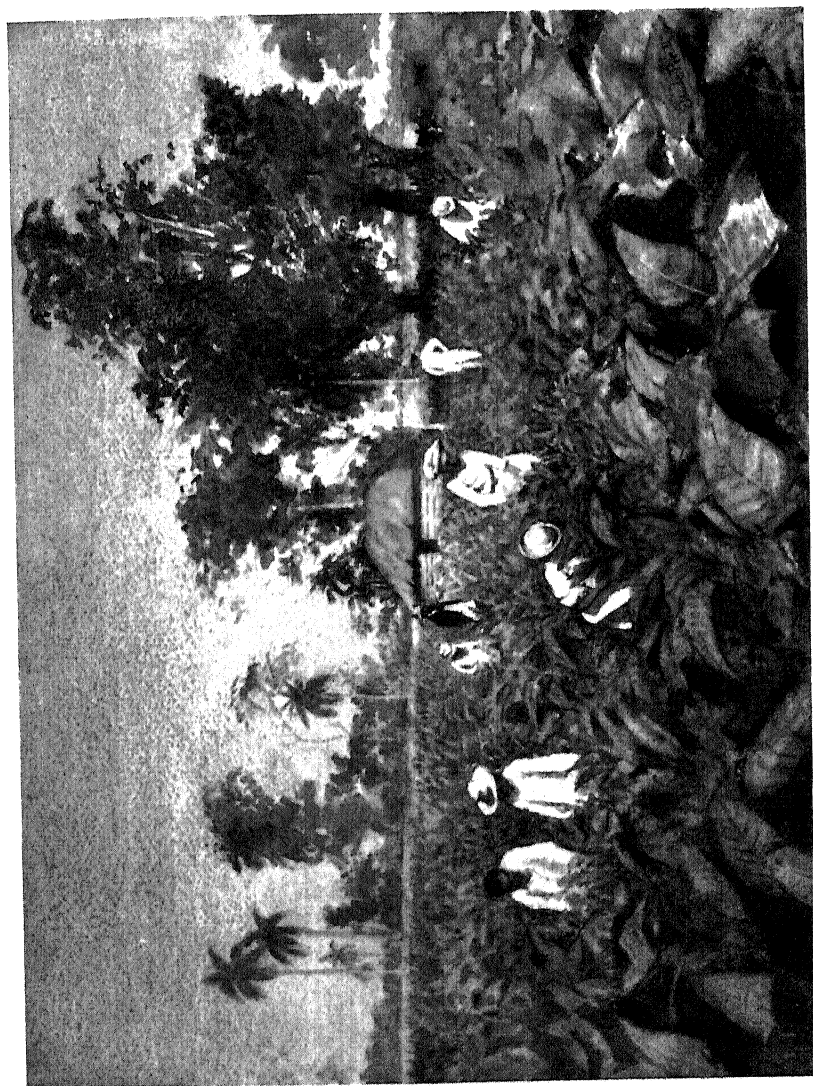
In the third room we find a number of girls encircling each cigar with a small paper band on which is printed in golden letters the name of the particular brand, such as "Romeo y Julieta," "King George V.," "The President," "Flor de Cuba," etc.

In another room are the box-makers and the girls who put on the many-coloured labels. Now we see hundreds of boxes of different sizes being packed with cigars and pressed down by machinery ready for market.

Finally, we are led into a long narrow room lined with thousands of boxes ready to go down to the wharf for shipment to all parts of the world.

If we asked the prices of these cigars we should be told that they ranged from 2 cents (1d.) to 3 dollars (12s.), according to the quality. The latter, of course, are consumed only by kings, dukes, lords, and millionaires.

Yes, the cigar industry of Cuba is truly great and interesting. The annual crop of tobacco is about half a million bales of a value approximating \$30,000,000 (£6,000,000).



CHAPTER XI

SUGAR PLANTATIONS AND MILLS

WHEN the tropical sun sends its shafts of heat vertically from a lurid sky, it is strenuous work to visit a sugar plantation and to watch the various processes through which the cane passes from the soil to the mills. Blinking their soft and beautiful eyes, and swishing their long hairy tails, the strong oxen move slowly and patiently with the sugar-laden waggons towards the factory. Leading them are woolly-headed negroes, Cubans or Spaniards, singing an old-time song or whistling one of their weird, sad dance tunes set in a minor key.

Passing through a lodge-gate, there stretches before you a vast expanse of open country. Groves of mahogany-trees form an enchanting background to the landscape. On either side are rows of coolie huts and stables for the mules and oxen. Yonder stands the well-built residence of the plantation owner, and a little farther on is the lofty factory lifting its tall chimneys towards the sky. What an intoxicating odour rises from the vast heaps of sugar-cane !

Before passing into the factory you reflect upon the wonderful romance of sugar. As you take a lump from the bowl with a pair of tongs and drop it into your cup of tea, do you ever think of its manifold

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experiences from the plantation to the tea-table? Just where it had its origin no one knows, but it is generally believed that the Chinese were the first to cultivate it. In the days when Spain ruled the sea and Columbus discovered America, the Spaniards introduced it into San Domingo, one of the numerous islands comprising what is known as the West Indies. So fertile was the soil that by 1520 the dues imposed upon sugar imported by Spain from these plantations enabled Charles V. to build his gorgeous palaces. Before the middle of the sixteenth century the growing of cane spread over all the inhabited sections of the West Indies and South America.

The historian, Oviedo, in 1532, wrote a very interesting account of the commencement of the sugar industry in the West Indies.

“Now, this business of raising sugar is one of the most lucrative occupations in all the world . . . the eyes of everyone else were shut to the possibilities, until the *bachiller* Gonzalo de Veloza, at his own very great expense, and by his own hard labour, brought sugar masters to this island and erected a mill to run by horse-power. He was the first to manufacture sugar in this whole island, and to him alone are due the thanks it is right to bestow upon the chief promoter of this great industry.

“Not that he was the first to plant cane in these Indies, because, even before his time, many men had planted and cultivated cane and made syrup from it; but because he was, as I have said, the first man to make sugar. For he, after he had grown a quantity of cane, built a horse-power mill on the bank of the River

Sugar Plantations and Mills

Nigua, and from the Canary Islands brought labourers skilled in the manufacture, then ground his cane, and was the very first to make sugar from it."

If you were to examine a sugar cane, you would see that it is a species of grass rising from six to fifteen feet high, and having a diameter of about two inches. The stalk contains a series of joints from which spring long leaves ornamented with beautiful feather-like flowers. The joints contain spongy matter saturated with juice, which becomes sweeter and sweeter as the stalk matures. With the ripening of the joints the leaves wither and fall off, leaving the stem to harden until ready for reaping.

From the plantation we will pass into the factory, where the cane is crushed between great heavy rollers in order to extract the juice from it. This sugar juice is run into a large trough, from whence it is conducted through a series of sieves and pipes to the various clarifiers up above. The clarifiers are iron vessels capable of holding about 600 gallons of juice. In the vessels the juice is heated to 130° F., and when it begins to simmer, the clear liquid below the surface scum is drawn off to a battery of pans, where it is heated by fire and boiled down to the crystallizing-point. It is then conducted to coolers in which the crystals form. For a few days it is allowed to stand prior to transference to hogsheads. In this condition it is quite ready for the process of refining, or for shipment to the refineries of the United States and Great Britain.

The method of refining is extremely interesting. At the refinery "the sugar crystals are melted in cast-iron tanks, filled with mechanical stirrers, and steam-pipes

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for heating the water. The hot liquid is then passed through twilled cotton bags encased in a meshing of hemp, through which the solution is mechanically strained. From fifty to two hundred of these filters are suspended in close chambers in which they are kept hot. The liquid is now passed for decolorization through beds of animal charcoal enclosed in cisterns to a depth of thirty feet, the sugar being received in vacuum pans. In these pans it is boiled to grain, the treatment being varied according to the nature of the finished sugar to be made. To make loaves, small crystals only are formed in the pans, the grains being liquified and then cast into moulds. To whiten the loaves they are treated with successive doses of saturated syrup, ending with a syrup of colourless sugar, the liquid then being taken out by suction."

It is through all these interesting phases of manufacture that your sugar passes before it comes to your table in the form of beautiful, crystal-like squares or cubes.

CHAPTER XII

THE BEAUTIFUL ISLE OF PINES

WHEN Christopher Columbus returned to Europe after his discovery of the Isle of Pines in June, 1492, it was no wonder that "aged ears played truant at his tales," and that "younger hearings were quite raptured," for it was impossible for him to exaggerate the beauties of this little island off the western coast of Cuba. How his eyes must have filled with wonder and admiration at the ever-changing colours of the Caribbean Sea! I wonder what he and his crew thought of the beauteous bed of the sea plainly visible from the deck of his vessel? What messages of the benevolent Creator those sheltering palms must have conveyed to their ears! And surely even that arch-pirate, Captain Morgan, must have felt shame at his own direful deeds in the presence of this sublime handiwork of a loving God. The beauty of this island has inspired many a writer of romance. In fact, it is generally believed that "Treasure Island" was the result of Robert Louis Stevenson's temporary sojourn there. The beauty of the sandy beaches is surpassed only by the magnificent layers of coral that lift their perforated heads towards the azure of the sky.

Not all the stories connected with the Isle are panegyrics, however, for along its southe

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are treacherous waters and vast jungles with which are associated fearful tales of shipwrecks and terrible battles with crocodiles. Sometimes appalling cyclones sweep across these waters, scattering vessels like chaff before the wind. Only a few years ago the ill-fated *Nicolas Castano* was caught in a cyclone, dashed to pieces, and the bodies of her crew were flung by the mountainous waves over the rugged rocks that fringe the lonely shore.

There can be no doubt that the Isle of Pines was the base of buccaneer operations in the far-off days of sea piracy. Caves are abundant, and many of them are just such hiding-places as we read of in the romantic histories of Captain Kidd and sea-rovers of his type. By the exercise of a little imagination one can people these caverns with the spirits of those dare-devil buccaneers. The tinkling of glasses, the singing of ribald songs, the coarse jokes and the fiendish peals of laughter still echo through the caves and woods. Many adventurers have explored this district in the hope of finding hidden treasure left there by pirates years ago ; but if such treasure is still in existence it continues to elude the vigilance of the treasure hunters.

Beautiful streams flow peacefully between wild bamboos ; native fruit trees stand unmolested in their isolation ; mangoes hang in clusters ; and wild orange-trees fill the air with an odour that intoxicates the senses. Coloured tropical birds pour forth their songs and innocent chatter from the branches of the variegated trees—thrushes, humming birds, cuckoos, parrots, owls, and other little birds too numerous to mention. Here the charming red and green parrots make their homes,

The Beautiful Isle of Pines

sometimes for a few months only, for they are a source of revenue to the natives who capture them when young and export them to the sterner climates of the north.

Crocodiles abound in the rivers, and scorpions are quite common. Delicately tinted dragon-flies are to be seen in abundance ; and the collector of butterflies is able to obtain some magnificent specimens.

This little island is now practically an American Colony, and many of the inhabitants believe that it will not be many years before the Stars and Stripes float over them. One cannot help noting the great change that has taken place in the life and nature of the people since the Indians claimed it solely for themselves, and no white face had looked upon its enchanting beauty. American commerce has stepped in, and romanticism has stepped out.

A most interesting legend is associated with the early Indian life of this historic island ; so interesting that it must be told here.

“ Many ages ago, before the white men came in their great ships from the other world, the isle was peopled by a powerful race of Indians. One tribe only dwelt among its hills and valleys, and therein lay the strength of the people ; for, though the great island to the northward (Cuba) boasted by far more inhabitants, they were divided into many tribes, no one of which was as strong as the race which dwelt on the smaller isle. Now, the tribes in those days were very fierce and constantly at war with one another, but though they that inhabited the larger island envied the great people to the southward, they could not prevail over them because they were divided.

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“The ruler of the warriors on the smaller isle was a mighty chief, whose word was their law ; and this chief had a son whom he cherished above all else. ‘For,’ he said, ‘in time he shall rule in my stead.’ But it was the custom among the warriors of the isle that no Prince should be suffered to rule over them until his courage had been tested in war. And so strong was this tribe and so great the fear with which it inspired its enemies, that throughout the youth of the Prince there had been no war and he had grown up in the midst of peace. Moreover, he took no pleasure in the tribal dances and mock battles of his people, but delighted in the silence of the woods, for he was a pensive youth. And while wandering thus among the solitudes he had acquired much wisdom, but it was the wisdom of peace. He drew his lessons from Nature. On the sterile hill-tops, where the trees were at constant war with the elements, they brought forth no fruit, but grew up gnarled and stunted, while in the rich soils of the valleys, where all was peaceful and still, they thrived and bore bountifully. Thus he reasoned that all tribes of the surrounding isle might prosper if they would abandon their strife and be at peace with one another. But when he spoke of these things to the young men of his tribe they turned away and smiled, for he was not of their nature.

“And so it came about that when age had whitened the hair of their chief, the old men of the council came to him and said: ‘Lo, the days that remain to thee seem not many, and whom shall we have to rule over us when thou art gone, for thy son, the Prince, has not yet been proven?’ And the chief fixed his eyes



IN THE ISLE OF PINES. *Chapter XII.*

The Beautiful Isle of Pines

upon the ground, for brave though he was, he feared for his son's sake. At length he roused himself, and, meeting the gaze of the council, replied : 'It is well. My son has not been tried. But lo, our enemies on yonder island are many. He shall go forth to battle with them.' So the chief called his warriors together, and leading forth his son, placed his own spear in his hand and his own shield over his heart. Then he bade him enter his war canoe that he might go against his enemies, and counselled him to return no more until he had proven himself. And the Prince sailed away at the head of his father's warriors to conquer the tribes on the great island to the north.

"The days passed, and at length one evening the heralds came running down from the hill-tops with the news that the war canoes of the tribe were returning. So the chief came and stood on the island strand, with the old men of his council about him, to await the coming of his warriors. And as the canoes drew near he saw that all of them save his son's were decked with branches of the palm-tree. At this the chief marvelled greatly, and turning to his council besought the reason thereof. But the old men looked bravely across the waters, for never before in all their years had they witnessed such a home-coming of their warriors.

"At last the canoes grated upon the shore, and as the warriors stepped forth the chief grew pale, for lo! his son was bound. For a moment the old chief stood speechless. Then lifting up his voice he addressed the subchief of the war-party : 'And you call this a victory, to thus return my son to me in bonds! Haste thee and explain, or die!' To which awful command

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the subchief made reply : ‘ May our great chief live long, until the sorrow of this day be forgotten ! Lo, thy son is thus returned to thee for that he left our camp on the first day of our landing and went among our enemies to talk of peace. And lo ! he had succeeded but for our warriors who fell upon them while in council and put them to the spear, all save this, thy son, whom we could not slay because he is thine.’

“ When the speaker had finished, the chief fixed his eyes upon his son, and in a terrible voice commanded : ‘ Speak, dog ! What hast thou to say ere thou perishest ?’ And the Prince, smiling, thus made answer : ‘ Patience, my sire. Lead me, I pray thee, into the forest depths, and there I will tell you all.’ And the chief commanded and they led him far into the woods to the banks of a beautiful rivulet. And here the chief bade them sever his bonds, whereat the Prince stood up before them and told again the story of the wind-tossed tree on the mountain and the fruitful one in the vale. But when he told them how he had sought to impart a lesson therefrom to their enemies, they mocked him, and the chief, in his anger, caught up a spear and thrust it into the heart of his son. And the Prince sank lifeless upon the greensward, while his blood flowed in a tiny crimson rill down the bank until it mingled with the waters of the rivulet.

“ And straightway the people knew that the Great Spirit was wroth with them for the evil they had done, for a hot wind swept down upon the isle and smote them with a deadly plague. Then, while the dire affliction was upon them, their enemies from the great island in the north suddenly appeared and would have

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fallen upon them had they not chanced to see the Prince lying dead on the greensward.

“When the chief of the avenging tribe learned the cause of the young man’s death, he paused, ere beginning his work of destruction, and commanded his warriors to fashion a grave beside the rivulet, and stooped down and lifted the body in his own arms. As he did this the assembled warriors marvelled, for out of the ground in the very spot where the Prince had lain gushed forth a beautiful spring as clear as crystal and as warm as blood. And the invading tribe knew this to be a token of good-will. And, instead of avenging themselves on their stricken enemies, they brought them to the wonderful spring and laved them in its waters, whereupon they immediately became well.

“This is the reason, declare old-time natives about Santa Fé, why those waters for many years afterwards bore the name of ‘The Spring of Peace,’ and why, unto this day, they are so revered throughout the Indies.”

CHAPTER XIII

FISHING FOR SPONGES

ALL boys and girls have learned from their natural history books, I suppose, that sponges are products of the sea ; but I wonder how many there are who know just where and how they are fished up. The process is so interesting that a few paragraphs cannot fail to captivate your fancy.

Next to the valuable sponge fisheries of the Mediterranean, those of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico are the most important. Very early in the nineteenth century excellent sponges were discovered off the southern coast of Florida, and the first cargo was shipped to New York in 1849. These specimens were found to be of first-rate quality, so an industry of extensive dimensions soon sprang up in the locality of the discovery. Other discoveries followed one by one, until to-day the waters of the various countries of America yield two-thirds of the world's supply in weight. In 1910 their crop of sponges weighed approximately 4,000,000 pounds, of the value of \$1,500,000 (£300,000).

At Tarpon Springs, Florida, over nine hundred vessels comprise the sponge-fishing fleet. Fishing is prohibited between May and October on account of the hitherto reckless manner in which the grounds were

Fishing for Sponges

being depleted. Although the sponge beds of Florida are not far from the Batabano beds of Cuba, the fishing methods adopted differ very materially. In the early days of the industry the fishermen used to wade through the water and tear up the sponges by hand. A little later a two-tined hook attached to a long pole came into use. The fishermen stood in the boats, and as the water is exceptionally clear in that vicinity, it was not difficult to scan the bottom of the sea, and pull up the sponges with the hooks. Sometimes, however, when many boats operated over one area, they caused an army of ripples to play upon the surface of the sea, thus making the bed almost invisible. To overcome this difficulty a wooden bowl, with a glass bottom, was invented, called a "sponge-glass," or "water-telescope." By means of this device the bottom of the sea became plainly visible.

The method of fishing is ably described by Mr. F. A. Pierce, an authority on the subject, thus :

"When a vessel reaches a sponging ground, if the weather is favourable and the water sufficiently clear, a bar is located by means of 'sighting' with a water-glass. The crew is sent out in small boats, two men in each, called the 'sculler' and the 'hooker,' the duty of the former being to propel the boat in obedience to the signals of the latter, and assist in handling the hooks when necessary. A proficient sculler has perfect command of the boat, stopping it almost on the instant. Upon the hooker devolves the work of catching and hooking the sponges. He leans over the side, watching the bottom through his water-glass, the hook with its pole resting conveniently across the boat, where

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it may be seized upon the instant. The position is a trying one physically, especially when the sea is choppy, and when the waves grow rough the work is impossible. The sponge-glass or bucket, with its glass bottom below the surface of the water, operates by dispelling reflection, and to heighten its efficiency the hooker usually wears a straw hat, which cuts off a large part of the direct light when his head is thrust into the mouth of the bucket. By this means the bottom may sometimes be seen in clear water to depths of fifty feet. When a sponge is sighted, the sculler manœuvres the boat into position at a word or signal from the hooker ; the latter seizes his hook, resting the pole on his shoulder, and with his right hand lowers it. It is then injected into the sponge, more or less distinctly visible through the water-glass, which is held in position by the left hand. In pulling or tearing the sponge a certain degree of skill is required to prevent mutilation, which, of course, impairs its value in the markets. Sometimes the formations adhere so tightly that it requires the united efforts of both men to loosen them, and in most cases parts of the base of the sponge are left behind.

“In deep water—that is, in depths over 38 or 40 feet—probably not more than one-third of the hookers have sufficient strength, keenness of sight, and skill with the pole, to work successfully. In consequence of this, and the fact that only when the water is exceptionally clear can the sponges be seen at all in the greater depths, most of the hooking is carried on in less than six fathoms of water.”

About fifteen years ago the diving apparatus was

Fishing for Sponges

introduced into the sponge fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico. This method is much more interesting and certainly more dangerous than fishing with the pole and hook. The crew consists of eight men—two divers, three oarsmen, two men in charge of the air apparatus, and a life-line man, whose duty it is to attend to the diver's signals.

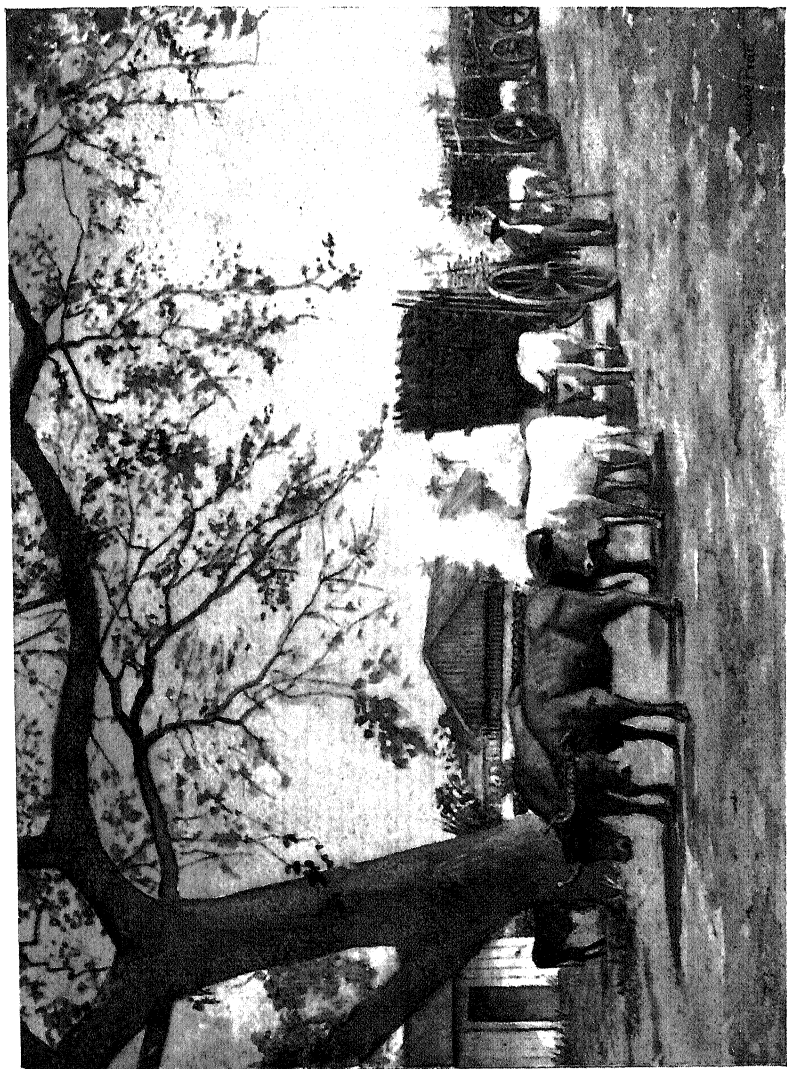
The work of the diver is arduous, and frequently attended by grave dangers. When he puts on his heavy armour or diving suit, he takes with him a fine large net, into which he packs the sponges to be drawn up to the surface by the men in the boat. The boat follows his movements closely, and the life-line man is continually on the alert for danger signals from below. The greatest danger attending the diver is the probability of sudden attacks by sharks. Man-eating sharks infest these sponge fisheries, and many are the thrilling stories the divers have to tell at the close of the day. It would be quite possible for a diver to deal a death-blow at one of these terrifying man-eaters; but if blood were drawn, in less than two minutes an army of sharks would be drawn to the assistance of their wounded companion. Therefore, the diver never strikes at his enemy; he merely stands still in the bed of sponges, and the shark thinking it a dead object, turns tail, and scurries elsewhere in search of victims.

The most important Cuban sponge beds lie between the main island and the Isle of Pines. About two thousand people are engaged in the industry. The hooking system is in vogue, as it has been found more suitable and profitable than the employment of divers.

When the sponges are taken out of the water they

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are generally black and slimy. To clean them thoroughly they are placed in pens in shallow water, where the ebb and flow of the tides can wash them about for seven or eight days. After the process of cleansing, the sponges are thrashed with sticks to kill any lingering life, and then they are strung up in bunches to dry. A few days later they are placed in heaps for the inspection of buyers, who bid for them according to size and quality. The last stage of the process is to pack in bales, forward to the warehouses, and finally ship them to the United States, Europe, and, in fact, every part of the globe.



CHAPTER XIV

THE CAVES OF MATANZAS

IF ever you are fortunate enough to visit the enchanted island of Cuba, you must certainly see the historic caves of Matanzas. Your feelings will be those of wonder, fear, and delight as you tread the well-worn, winding pathway beneath those glittering arches. Ghosts of buccaneers will gaze at you from secluded inlets, and the murmuring of the spirits of the Indians will fill the chambers of your mind with fearful and fascinating images. They are fifty-four miles from Havana, and can be approached either by the sea or by rail. The charge for admission is one dollar (about four shillings), and, of course, a tip for the guide.

The mouth of the caves is reached by a long flight of steps. It was customary to lead visitors through by the light of a torch ; but as the smoke marred the beauty of the roof, electric bulbs now light you on your way. The caves are about three miles long, and contain over thirty brilliant chambers, the main one, called the Gothic Temple, being 250 feet long and 80 feet wide, and supported by stately columns. The projections of stalactite and stalagmite look extremely fantastic and awe-inspiring, and give one the impression that the chambers were once the festive halls of a fairy king or the palace of a forgotten people who revelled in the loneliness and beauty of their subterranean dwelling.

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Although these caves must have been known to the pirates who had a genius for discovering subterranean passages, they were not known generally until the year 1861. It is said that a Chinese labourer, while extracting limestone in the district, lost his crowbar, which, the moment it vanished through the earth, so startled him that he fled in terror from the spot. Investigation was begun, with the result that the magnificent caverns were soon made known throughout the whole of America and Europe.

The process of crystallization is caused by the perpetual dripping of water carrying with it small particles of limestone, which harden until the stalactites look like bunches of glistening icicles. Sometimes these stalactites meet the stalagmites rising from the base, thus forming magnificent crystal columns. Boys and girls are somewhat afraid to visit these caves alone, for in one part of them weird noises can be heard distinctly, and legend reports that these are the spirits of the aboriginal Indians who were cruelly slaughtered there by the early invaders of Cuba. It is probable, however, that the noises are caused by a subterranean stream flowing over the top of the caves or beneath their base. By the way, the name Matanzas means in the Spanish language "slaughter."

The train-ride from Havana to Matanzas is one of the most beautiful in the island. From the carriage window can be seen innumerable avenues of palms leading to the doors of the rich planters' homes. Acres of rich red soil on hill-side and in vale are covered with millions of sugar-canes ; and, slowly drawn by drowsy oxen, the heavy carts laden with the sweet sticks wend

The Caves of Matanzas

their way to the long ranges of smoking chimneys that mark out the mills. Massive ceiba-trees with tortuous trunks stand like sentinels among the evergreen foliage and grassy fields. Doubtless you have seen pictures of Indian children, and you have decided to send out money wherewith to purchase clothing for them. Well, the Cuban children can be seen to-day exercising the same indifference to fashionable suits and dainty dresses. The air is always so balmy that if decency does not prescribe clothing, certainly climatic conditions will not.

Overlooking the town of Matanzas from Cumbre Hill is the Hermitage of Montserrate, built in 1870. Its most interesting feature is a shrine made out of Spanish cork representing that in the Monastery of Montserrate. This monastery was built in the ninth century to enshrine La Santa Imagen, a figure of the Holy Virgin which, according to tradition, was made by St. Luke and taken to Spain by St. Peter. Before this image the founder of the Jesuitical Order bowed, and consecrated his life to Christ and the Mother of God. Miracles are said to have been performed at the shrine in Matanzas, and many thankofferings adorn the altar. Among them are diamond ear-rings and necklace and crucifix worn by the image of the Virgin. Crutches and sticks are numerous, having been left there by cripples upon whom Our Lady had bestowed her beneficent healings.

One of the most exquisite landscapes in Cuba is visible from the Hermitage—the Yumuri Valley, with the river San Juan augmenting its beauty. The greenery crowning the gorge is appalling in its loveliness ; it is inspiring at sunrise, and melancholic at

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sunset. When the Divine Artist is at work with his colours in the western sky, shafts of many-coloured lights streak the placid valley and spread a halo of gold over the quaint houses with their strangely tinted roofs and walls, and the quiet green gardens studded with laurel-trees, palms, and multitudes of flowers. How gracefully the hills go down to the sea, as though longing to receive the kiss of the white sea-foam fringing the tortuous coast of the sapphire bay ! Truly this is a scene to stir the emotions and breathe new life into the imagination of the beholder. On either side of the river palms and bamboos extend their long green arms ; and on the bosom of the water whistling “lighterers ” steer their sugar-laden boats to the vessels anchored in the busy harbour.

CHAPTER XV

ACROSS CUBA BY RAIL

If one can endure the heat of a railway car, a trip across Cuba by rail in summer is a feast of beauty for the eyes that can appreciate the glamour of subtropical scenery.

The Cuba railroad runs through the heart of the country from Havana to Santiago, with branches to the chief towns on the north and south coasts. Its length is about 440 miles, and 163 miles of rail are now under construction. The track is standard gauge, and its equipment is equal to those of the United Kingdom and the United States. First-class sleeping and observation cars are attached to the trains. The road passes through enchanting scenery—forests of mahogany, cedar, and ebony, clusters of vines, fields of orchids, cane and tobacco plantations, cattle ranches, and quaint little towns with even quainter inhabitants.

If we board the train at Havana, it will take us twenty-four hours to reach Santiago de Cuba at the other extremity of the island. However, so many places of interest intervene that we shall not feel disposed to pass them by contented with a glimpse from the observation car. At the same time, we cannot stop to take in the beauty and characteristics of the many towns, villages, and quiet picturesque nooks that woo us as we race over the railway track.

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As we have already visited the caves of Matanzas, our first stopping-place shall be Santa Clara, the capital of the province bearing the same name. This town is also the centre of Cuba's greatest cattle and sugar province. On every hand you may see thousands of prime cattle feeding on the succulent grasses, or chewing their cud knee-deep in a stream flowing between an avenue of graceful palm-trees. If you took a drive through the country, you would be charmed to see six or eight oxen yoked to a cart laden with sugar-cane on the way to the railway cars standing at a convenient spot on the sugar plantation ready to convey it to the waiting mills. When the train arrives at the mill, the cars are drawn one by one under a travelling crane spanning the railway. The stems of cane are then transferred to the upper stories ready to pass through the various processes of rendition to sugar.

Apart from its cattle and sugar industries, its quaint streets and houses, its variegated trees and flowers, and its scenery, Santa Clara is interesting from an historical standpoint. It was founded in 1689 on the site of an old Indian village known to Christopher Columbus by the name of Cubanacan, meaning "in the centre of Cuba." The centre of the island was chosen after much deliberation as being farthest removed from the pirate-invested coasts. Those celebrated pirates and devastators—Captain Morgan, Gilbert Giron, Franquesnay, L'Ollonais, and Grammont, about whose deeds volumes could be written—harassed the people year after year, plundered their stores, burned their houses, and starved the women and children. Many of the original founders of Santa Clara came from a town

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called San Juan de los Remedios, which was probably the most unfortunate settlement in Cuba. Writing of this pirate-ridden town one historian says: "The town itself presented a sad and disconsolate appearance. Its streets were deserted, its houses abandoned, and not a person appeared in all that vicinity. Pirates invaded now easily, because of the fact that the place was empty. They sacked the houses, burned many of them, and the archives. They profaned the sanctuary of religion there, so great was their audacity, stole jewels and other objects used in religious service, and destroyed amid vituperation those sacred images the piety and devotion of the faithful had placed in the temple they outraged. News of these happenings augmented the uncertainty and terror in which the people lived. No sooner did a family find refuge under the roof of a hut where its members thought to be safe, than there arrived some rumour to alarm all, so that they fled, hopeless, into the wilderness again. Nobody had a fixed place of abode. The people were ruined. They lost their crops, and plantings were not cared for, which was detrimental to owners and to the community at large as well. So deplorable was the situation that for six months, and even a year, the town of San Juan de los Remedios was totally abandoned, and not a soul went back to walk in the streets."

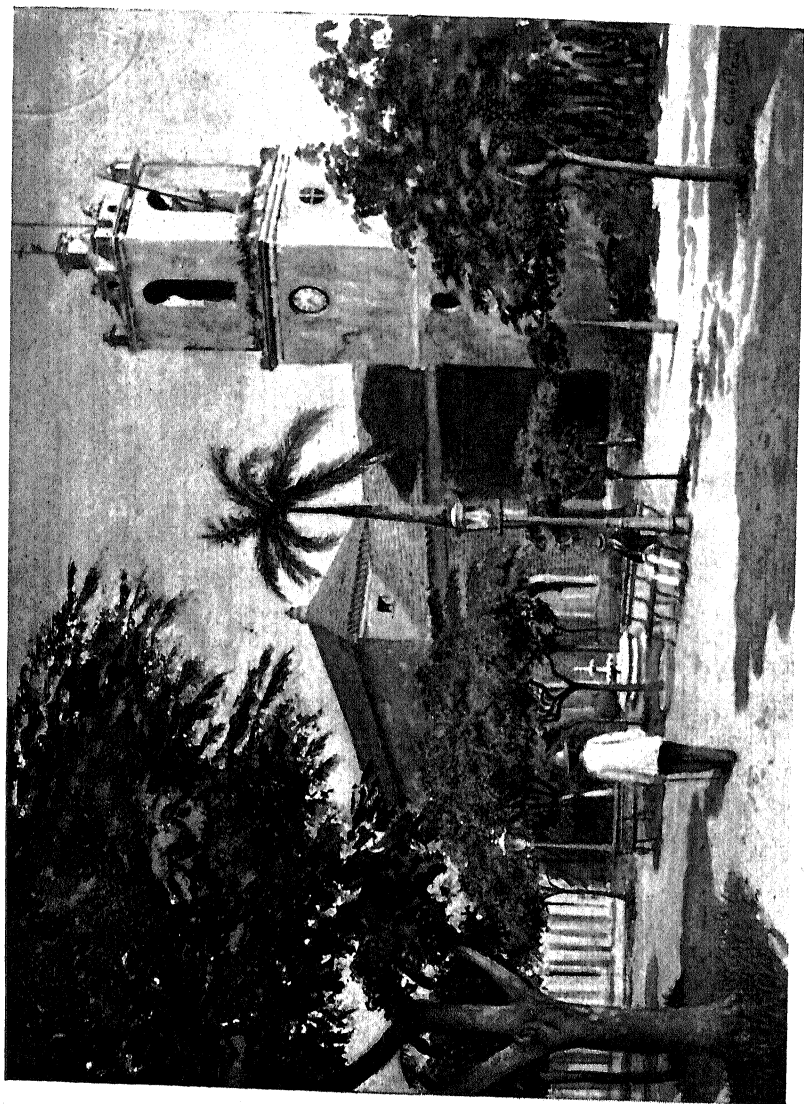
No wonder these unfortunate people sought refuge in the only place that would be likely to escape the cruel depredations of the merciless pirates. Under the guidance of a native of Santa Clara you would be shown many spots of historic interest, as well as old buildings whose walls could tell many a harrowing tale. You

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would be shown, also, the highways leading to the ports of Sagua la Grande and Sagua la Chica, cut through a section of the country that was once covered with trees, vines, weeds, and thick tropical vegetation. What a haul the pirates would capture to-day were they to return to life and raid the numerous wealthy commercial establishments now located there !

Our next stopping-place shall be at the lovely city of Camaguey, with its population of 30,000. This is a favourite resort of American tourists. Although the leading factors of modern commerce have invaded the city, such as electric street cars, banks, postal and telegraph offices, electric light, and commercial houses, it has lost none of the picturesqueness associated with Cuban towns of ancient memory. Churches bearing the luring impress of time adorn its winding streets. Fine old houses, more or less crumbling, with their quaint wooden window grilles, fluted roofs, heavy masonry, and stout doors, create in the visitor a longing to hear the patios relate the stories told within by people who now sleep in the quiet churchyard hard by. Here is another town that has often been sacked by pirates, and in imagination one can see the terrified women and children fleeing through those tortuous streets at the sounds of alarm shouted by the watchman at the approach of danger.

Among the venerable churches there stands La Merced, built in the early part of the seventeenth century by missionaries of Our Lady of Mercy. This order, however, gradually sank into oblivion, and so the church was adopted by a body called the "Barefoot Carmelites," the descendants of which still occupy the



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old-fashioned monastery. Inside the church is a brilliant silver altar said to have cost over forty thousand dollars Spanish. It also contains a sepulchre of hammered silver, weighing about five hundred pounds and adorned with an imposing effigy of the Saviour of mankind.

Another old church, once a hermitage, is La Soledad, built in the year 1758. The interior, though somewhat frigid, is ornamented with artistic frescoes of comparatively recent date.

Cattle-raising and sugar-planting are becoming extensive and profitable industries in this section of the island. Canadians and Americans anticipate further commercial development, for they appear to be settling there in ever-increasing numbers.

The third and last large city we shall be able to visit is Santiago de Cuba, where Madame Patti and Calve once sang to very "thin" houses. It is supposed to be the most picturesque city in Cuba, due to its being built on a legion of wooded hills. The streets are steep and tortuous, and the houses are quaintly built and painted in a greater variety of colours than even those in the capital, Havana. Stately churches, picturesque parks, avenues of palms, patches of tropical flowers, pretty feathered song-birds, and historic houses keep the visitor interested for many days. The city is lighted by electricity, electric cars are on the streets, and from morning till night the thoroughfares are alive with the bustle of traffic and the whirr of wheels.

The first settlement of this historic city took place under Velasquez in 1514, and no history of Cuba could be written unless Santiago figured largely in its pages.

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Not only is it saturated with deeds of daring in olden days ; it was the storm-centre of the Spanish-American War, by which the Cuban people were liberated from the bondage of Spain in 1898 and given their coveted independence. As you gaze at Morro Castle you can picture to yourself the advent of the Spanish fleets under Cervera sailing into the jaws of death. No sooner had they approached the coast than volley after volley was fired into their iron ribs, until they lay scattered along the seashore never again to muster sufficient courage for another attack.

The Americans have done almost as much for Santiago de Cuba as for Havana. The city was once a hotbed of yellow fever ; but a modern sanitary system has so renovated conditions there that it is now one of the most desirable residential places in Cuba. Its population of 45,000 is characterized by great commercial activity. Sugar, cocoa, coffee, tobacco and cigars, honey and wax, native timber, copper and iron ores figure among the exports that keep the port a hive of industry year in and year out.

CHAPTER XVI

A FASCINATING STORY

THE history of Cuba is saturated with luring legends, deeds of daring, and tales of piracy ; and among them all, none is more fascinating than the beautiful story associated with the church of Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Cobre (Our Lady of Charity of Cobre).

In the province of Santiago stands the historic mining village of Cobre, where copper has been unearthed from the days when the Spanish colonists set out towards the West Indies immediately after Columbus had heralded his discovery throughout Spain. On the top of a hill, whose copper-coloured soil under the influence of the rising sun looks like a bulk of gold, stands the ruins of the shrine of Our Lady of Cobre, an image that has been graphically described by a celebrated writer :

“Her beauty is admirable. She consoles all who look upon her. Her glance is pleasant, yet so serious that, without causing fear, it evokes reverence in all beholders. Her colour is clear brunette ; her eyes are so lively they seem to be looking in every direction at once, yet their regard is composed and frank. Her whole aspect is one of celestial authority. On her left arm she carries her son. In her right hand is a cross set with an emerald. The features of the child are perfect, in colour very like the mother’s. He bears in

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His left hand a round ball, signifying the world, and His right is lifted as though He were about to bestow a blessing."

For the origin of this famous image which has become the patron saint of Cuba, we must go back to the year 1510, when a daring sea-rover named Alonso de Hojeda endeavoured to found a small colony at San Sebastian. Many pages would be required to narrate the awful sufferings of this pioneer colonizer and his band of followers. Harassed by pirates, warlike tribes, hunger and thirst, their numbers dwindled day by day. It seemed that nothing could relieve their sufferings but death.

Prior to leaving Spain, Alonso de Hojeda had been presented by Bishop Juan de Fonseca with a beautiful image of the Mother of God which he carried in his knapsack wherever he went. During the fearful privations he and his colony suffered in the swampy mangroves of Cuba, he would produce the image and exhort his followers to implore her pity. Hojeda vowed that if their prayers were answered he would leave the image in the first village at which they arrived in safety. Many of the noble little band died on the march ; but the strongest reached Cueyba in safety. In accordance with his vow Hojeda gave the image of Our Lady to the Indian chief there. An oratory was built and the image was placed upon the altar. We are told that the Indians took kindly to it ; and in time of battle they called upon her to scatter their enemies.

Once, we are told, the power of the image was put to the test. A certain tribe of Indians had said that their gods were more powerful than Our Lady of Cueyba's

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tribe. To decide it two men, one from each tribe, were bound; the god of the one first liberated was to be considered the more powerful. As the two men stood bound in the middle of a field, the one of Cueyba's tribe was granted a vision of the Virgin Mother who came towards him, touched his bonds with a sceptre and liberated him, after which he approached his opponent and bound him tighter and tighter in the presence of his tribe and their heathen gods.

Shortly after this incident the owner of Our Lady appears to have been seized with a fear that the image might ultimately get into the hands of his enemies; so he flung it into one of the rivers that flows slowly and rhythmically into Nipe Bay.

The next time we hear of the image is in 1628. Two Indians had gone down to Nipe Bay to gather salt. On the way they were detained by bad weather for a few days. One morning after the storm had subsided, they put off from the shore. They had rowed only a short distance when they were surprised by a strange object coming towards them above the crest of a wave. Judge of their astonishment when they discovered that it was the image of the Virgin Mother. In her right hand she bore a cross, upon which were inscribed in letters of gold: "I am the Virgin of Charity." Her child was on her left arm, and she appeared to be riding unsupported above the sea. The men lifted her into their little boat and bore her to one Miguel Galan, who in turn bore her to the principal of the copper mines, D. Francisco Sanchez de Moya. A little temple was built for her, and a copper lamp was kept burning perpetually at the altar.

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In this temple a very strange thing occurred. Every night when the sacristan went to trim the lamp he found that the image disappeared, but it always returned regularly at daybreak. The superstitious worshippers interpreted this conduct as a desire on the part of Our Lady to be transferred to a more worthy temple; therefore, amidst great pomp and triumph, she was conveyed to the peaceful little church in the village of Cobre.

In answer to the prayers of the people as to why she vanished so often from the altar, strange lights flickered on the summit of a hill of copper, and interpreting this as an intimation that on this spot her shrine must be erected, the people at once built a fitting shrine for her permanent abode.

Until quite recently, sticks and crutches could be seen lying round her altar, as a testimony to the many miracles performed by Our Lady of Charity of Cobre. Costly jewels decorated the altar, and the chair in which the image rested was made out of beautiful tortoise-shell inlaid with ivory and gold.

Everybody in Cuba adores the Virgin, particularly sailors. On September 8, at the Festival of the Virgin of Cobre, thousands of pilgrims visited the shrine to pay their homage. So great is the influence of Our Lady that fishermen of Cuba will take up any fish caught in Cuban waters, and show you upon its scales the image of this mysterious and miraculous Patron Saint of the island.

CHAPTER XVII

A PEEP AT A POPULAR BEVERAGE

WE are all familiar with the myriads of advertisements that greet us in every street, at every railway-station, and in every magazine and newspaper, announcing that So-and-so's cocoa is the best ; we also sip it at breakfast and supper-time, and feel revived by its healthful qualities ; but how few of us understand the processes associated with its growth and manufacture.

If you were to take a ride on a mule through certain districts of Cuba at certain periods of the year, you would have an opportunity of seeing just how cocoa appears in its infant state. Under the shade of large forest trees the cacao orchards bring forth their delicate fruit. The trees are not at all unlike some of the fruit trees seen in an English or American orchard. In infancy they are rather small, but in about four years they reach a height of twenty feet, and begin to bear fruit in pods, which hang from branches and stems. These pods are from six to ten inches long, and their multitudinous colours—grey, orange, pink, green, yellow, and crimson—are very fair to look upon under the strange light of a brilliant tropical sunset. A distant prospect of the leaves is exquisite, for their colour varies from dark green to rich copper.

The orchards are usually arranged in long rows, the

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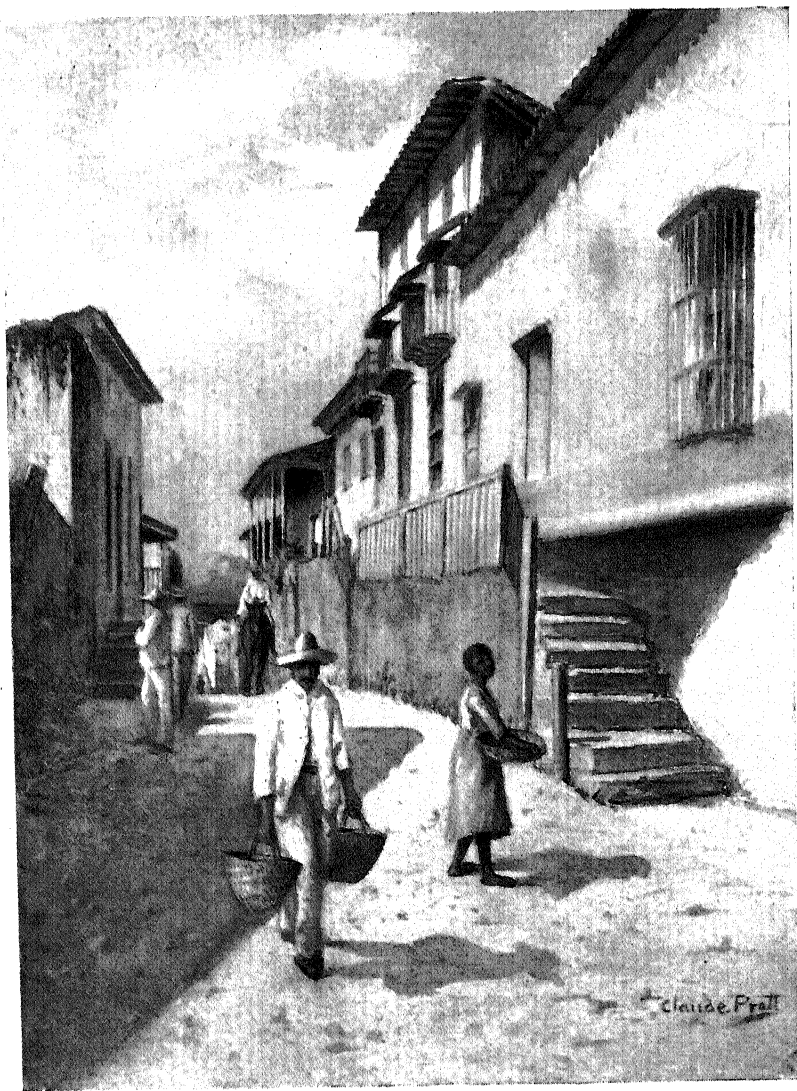
trees being about sixteen feet apart, and when they have reached their sixth or seventh birthday their boughs begin to intertwine, thus forming a series of enchanting glades that furnish a welcome shelter from the glaring sun.

Like other products of the orchard, the cacao-tree has an army of enemies, against whom the planter wages continual warfare. The delicate pods bearing the cocoa nibs are frequently attacked by rats, jutias, and birds, and if once the sensitive skin is pierced, the pods soon begin to decay. However strange it may seem, the planter's best friend is the snake ; for he is much feared by the animal kingdom, and is the more effective in the destruction of foes than even the shot of the planter.

After its tenth birthday a tree will increase in fecundity every year, until it brings forth sixty to one hundred and forty pods, each pod yielding from thirty-five to forty beans. Although the trees are fruitful nearly all the year, harvestings are generally confined to winter and summer pickings.

In harvest-time the orchard is alive with negroes and Cubans who go forth armed with "goulets," the sharp edges of which clip the cocoa pods from the branches. The pods are then collected from beneath the trees, and women extract the beans by the aid of wooden spoons. After passing through a process of fermentation the beans are spread out on trays to dry in the sun. In a few days they are ready to be packed in bags prior to their transportation to the various cocoa manufacturing countries in the world.

Exceedingly interesting are the operations connected



STREET SCENE, SANTIAGO DE CUBA. *Page 73.*

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with the conversion of the beans into cocoa after they have crossed the Atlantic to the factory where a body of skilled workers anxiously await their arrival. The first operation is performed by a winnowing machine, whose duty it is to separate the sheep from the goats—that is, remove all dust and unsound beans from the good ones.

When the good beans are separated from the chaff, they are conveyed to a battery of roasters and heated by experienced workmen until the desired aroma is obtained. Then follows the process of cooling prior to the splitting of the beans in order to release the imprisoned souls—the kernels or “nibs.”

The process of grinding between horizontal mill-stones is the next operation, which is for the purpose of extracting the “butter.” From the mill-stones, the substance, by the use of what is known as a “press-pot,” is converted into a dry cake which, in its turn, is ground into a flour and transferred to the tins and packets so familiar to lovers of this tropical beverage.

This method of manufacturing cocoa differs very much from the primitive methods adopted by the early Spanish settlers in America, of whom it is written :

“For this purpose they have a broad, smooth stone, well polished or glazed very hard, and being made fit in all respects for their use, they grind the cacaos thereon very small, and when they have so done, they have another broad stone ready, under which they keep a gentle fire.

“A more speedy way for the making up of the cacao into chocolate is this : They have a mill made in the form of some malt-mills, whose stones are firm and

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hard, which work by turning, and upon this mill are ground the cacaos grossly, and then between the other stones they work that which is ground yet smaller, or else by beating it up in a mortar bring it into the usual form."

Associated with the early history of cocoa we find some curious and humorous allusions to its influence upon the temper and health of the people. One of the most quaint references is to be found in an old volume published in the days of the Commonwealth.

"The women of that city" (Chiapa), "it seems, pretend much weakness and squeamishness of stomacke, which they say is so great that they are not able to continue in church while the mass is briefly hurried over, much lesse while a solemn high mass is sung and a sermon preached, unles they drink a cup of hot chocolatte and eat a bit of sweetmeats to strengthen their stomackes. For this purpose it was much used by them to make their maids bring them to church, in the middle of mass or sermon, a cup of chocolatte, which could not be done to all without a great confusion and interrupting both mass and sermon. The Bishop, perceiving this abuse, and having given faire warning for the omitting of it, but all without amendment, thought fit to fix in writing upon the church dores an excommunication against all such as should presume at the time of service to eate or drinke within the church. This excommunication was taken by all, but especially by the gentlewomen, much to heart, who protested, if they might not eate or drinke in the church, they could not continue in it to hear what otherwise they were bound unto. But none of these reasons would move

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the Bishop. The women, seeing him hard to be entreated, began to slight him with scornfull and reproachfull words: others slighted his excommunication, drinking in iniquity in the church, as the fish does water, which caused one day such an uproar in the Cathedrall that many swordes were drawn against the Priests, who attempted to take away from the maids the cups of chocolatte which they brought unto their mistresses, who at last, seeing that neither faire nor foule means would prevail upon the Bishop, resolved to forsake the Cathedrall: and so from that time most of the city betooke themselves to the Cloister Churches, where by the Nuns and Fryers they were not troubled.

“The Bishop fell dangerously sick. Physicians were sent for far and neere, who all with one joynt opinion agreed that the Bishop was poisoned. A gentlewoman, with whom I was well acquainted, was commonly censured to have prescribed such a cup of chocolatte to be ministered by the Page, which poisoned him who so rigorously had forbidden chocolatte to be drunk in the church. Myself heard this gentlewoman say that the women had no reason to grieve for him, and that she judged, he being such an enemy to chocolatte in the church, that which he had drunk in his house had not agreed with his body. And it became afterwards a proverbe in that country: ‘Beware of the chocolatte of Chiapa!’ . . . that poisoning and wicked city, which truly deserves no better relation than what I have given of the simple Dons and the chocolatte-confectioning Donas.”

CHAPTER XVIII

A TALE OF THE BUCCANEERS

MANY and fascinating are the stories of piratical adventure associated with the group of islands known as the West Indies. From the year Columbus returned to Europe and spread the news of the golden lands he had discovered, down to the latter part of the last century, pirates have scoured the waters of the Caribbean Sea in search of plunder. Bloody battles have been fought on the high seas between those dare-devil adventurers and Spanish sailors ; and many a gallant out-numbered crew has succumbed to the onslaughts of the buccaneers, who esteemed the cargo of a merchant-ship of far more value than many sailors.

Only one story can be told here. It is an incident in the piratical expeditions of that celebrated buccaneer, Captain Morgan.

Captain Morgan had been scouring the seas of the West Indies for many years, and had struck terror into the hearts not only of the navigators bringing their vessels laden with merchandise to Europe, but also the inhabitants of Cuba, Jamaica, and other islands. In the early part of the seventeenth century he had landed on the south coast of Cuba, where he succeeded in terrorizing the Spaniards with his formidable fleet of twelve sail and 700 fighting men, partly English and partly French.

A Tale of the Buccaneers

The pirate called together a council of his men, some of whom advised a night attack on the city of Havana, which, if a certain number of priests could be captured, would easily surrender. This project, however, was not put into operation because there were several on board who had once been prisoners in Havana, and they told their leader that it would be impossible to capture the fortified Castle of the Three Kings without an army of at least 1,500 men. Some suggested that they go to the Isle of Pines, land "fourteen leagues from the said city," and take it by a rear attack.

After further deliberation, they decided to assault El Puerto del Principe, where dwelt a rich Spanish colony, arguing that as it was some miles from the sea, and consequently never previously sacked by pirates, they would be able to subdue the people easily and carry off a magnificent booty. Captain Morgan consented, ordered the anchors to be weighed, and in a very short time they were off on their expedition of plunder.

Having arrived at a bay called El Puerto de Santa Maria, they anchored for the night, proposing to attack at daybreak. Now, it happened that they had on board a Spanish prisoner who, having heard the plans discussed by the council of Englishmen (they did not know that the prisoner understood English), swam ashore during the night and informed the inhabitants of El Puerto del Principe of the designs of the pirates. The Spaniards immediately began to hide their riches, and to carry away all movable property. The Governor raised all the people of the town, freeman and slaves, and with a part of them occupied a post that the pirates were obliged to pass on their way to the town. He also

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commanded trees to be cut down and laid across the road to obstruct the passage of the pirates. Ambuscades were built and pieces of cannon placed in position to fire upon their enemies when they approached. The Governor got together some 800 men, part of whom were located at the ambuscades ; but the greater part were marshalled in a field near the town ready to meet the attack.

The dauntless pirate landed his men and began his march towards the town. Seeing that all avenues were impassable, he led his men with great difficulty through the woods, by which route they escaped the ambuscades. The Governor had seen their approach, and so immediately despatched a troop of horse to effect a frontal attack which, if successful, would enable him to pursue them with his main force. With drums beating and colours flying the pirates advanced and formed a semicircle. For some time a fierce battle raged. The dexterity of the pirates was too much for the Spaniards. The Governor with many of his men lay dead upon the field ; the rest of the army scampered off to the woods with the pirates pursuing them in the rear and inflicting terrible slaughter. The pirates were victorious, only a comparatively few men being lost in battle.

“The skirmish lasted four hours. They entered the town not without great resistance of such as were within, who defended themselves as long as possible, and many seeing the enemy within the town shut themselves up in their own homes, and thence made several shots upon the pirates, who thereupon threatened them saying, ‘If you surrender not voluntarily, you shall soon see the town in a flame, and your wives and children torn in

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pieces before your faces.' Upon these menaces the Spaniards submitted to the discretion of the pirates, believing they could not continue there long."

When the pirates had got possession of the town, they imprisoned the inhabitants in the churches and pillaged everything they could lay their hands on. Provisions and prisoners were brought into the camp daily. Intoxicated with their success, they became indifferent to the well-being of the prisoners, whom they tormented to extort from them the hiding-place of their goods and money. Women and children were left to die of starvation in the churches. Having laid their hands upon everything worth taking, they threatened the prisoners with banishment to Jamaica unless they found sufficient money to ransom themselves; also, unless they paid a ransom for the town, their houses should be left in ashes. Four prisoners were despatched through the country to collect the required ransom. After a few days the prisoners returned saying, "We have run up and down and searched all the neighbouring woods and places we most suspected, and yet have not been able to find any of our party, nor consequently any fruit of our Embassy; but if you are pleased to have a little longer patience with us, we shall certainly cause all that you demand to be paid within fifteen days." To this Captain Morgan assented.

While the pirates were searching the woods, they captured a certain negro bearing important letters which Captain Morgan found to be from the Governor of Santiago to certain prisoners, wherein he said that they should not be too eager to pay the ransom; but put off the pirates with excuses and delays until he

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could send relief, which would certainly be in a few days.

This news exasperated the chief of the pirates. He immediately ordered all plunder to be taken aboard. The Spaniards were told that unless the ransom were forthcoming on the following day, he would wait not a minute longer, but leave every house in the town reduced to a heap of ashes.

The efforts of Captain Morgan to extort the ransom were of no avail. So he undertook to leave the town and set the prisoners free conditionally that they supplied him with 500 oxen or cows, helped to kill and salt them, and carry them on board. This the Spaniards consented to do, after which the prisoners were liberated, and Captain Morgan set sail before the Governor of Santiago had time to fulfil his promise of relief.